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Rouben Mamoulian: Reinventing reality—his art and his life

Spergel, Mark Jonathan, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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ROUBEN MAMOULIAN: REINVENTING REALITY--HIS ART AND HIS
LIFE

by

MARK SPERGEL

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

1990

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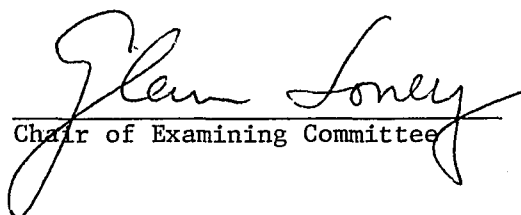
MARK SPERGEL

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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.

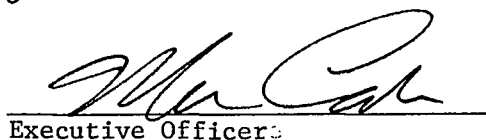
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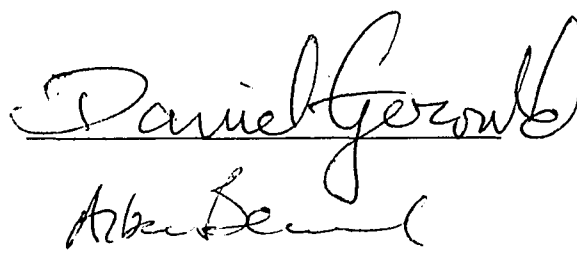
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
BERTHA JAMPEL SPERGEL

INTRODUCTION

Commenting on the career of fellow filmmaker George Stevens, Rouben Mamoulian remarked, " . . . no matter how you put it, films for a director are always autobiographical."¹ At a glance, Mamoulian's maxim seems not to apply to him. He strongly disapproved of the use of public art to work through private conflicts. These conflicts, he felt, were better left for the analyst's couch. Similarly, he abhorred the fashion of intimate self-disclosure by celebrities. Although he actively sought opportunities to discuss his work in public, he avoided revealing anything of his private life or its influence on his work. His plays and films are never overtly autobiographical or personal. But in a deeper, less obvious way, his need to separate the public and the private self guided him to material where this very conflict is played out. In his attempt to circumvent self-disclosure he paradoxically yielded an artistic expression of a profoundly personal nature. While Mamoulian's work can, in many ways, be characterized as detached, it is unwittingly autobiographical. By applying Mamoulian's maxim to his own career and integrating a previously undisclosed personal history with the also

unquestioned public autobiography we can arrive at a truer, more informed history of this important innovator in twentieth century film and theatre.

Mamoulian trained at the Moscow Art Theatre and directed a major London stage production while still in his early twenties. On the basis of Mamoulian's London work, George Eastman invited him to Rochester to help set up an opera company and school. Eastman wanted a company that performed in English and that worked to raise the dramatic values of opera production.

Mamoulian arrived in America in 1923. After directing opera in Rochester for three years, Mamoulian went to work for The Theatre Guild School in Scarborough, New York. From this he catapulted himself into directing Porgy, the opening production of the Guild's 1927 season. His success with Porgy led him to direct twelve Broadway stage productions within a three years, most of them produced by the Theatre Guild. In addition, he directed the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's opera, Die Glückliche Hand (The Hand of Fate), at the Metropolitan Opera House. The first six plays, after Porgy: Marco Millions, These Modern Women, Cafe Tomaza, Women, Congai, and Wings Over Europe--were all done in 1928. Between 1929 and 1930 he spent several months learning filmmaking. By year's end he had directed his first film, Applause, at Paramount's Astoria Studios. He also directed one Broadway show in 1929--The Game of Love and Death. In

1930 he directed R.U.R., A Month in the Country, Die Glückliche Hand, A Farewell to Arms, and Solid South.

Mamouljian's film career spanned three decades and resulted in sixteen completed feature films, plus several completed by others. The completed films, all made in Hollywood after Applause, were City Streets (Paramount, 1931), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Paramount, 1931), Love Me Tonight (Paramount, 1932), Song of Songs (Paramount, 1933), Queen Christina (M. G. M., 1933), We Live Again (Samuel Goldwyn, 1934), Becky Sharp (Pioneer, 1935), The Gay Desperado (Pickford-Lasky, 1936), High, Wide and Handsome (Paramount, 1937), Golden Boy (Columbia, 1939), The Mark of Zorro (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1940), Blood and Sand (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1941), Rings on Her Fingers (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1942), Summer Holiday (M-G-M, 1947), and Silk Stockings (M-G-M, 1957). He began directing Laura (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1944) but was replaced by its producer, Otto Preminger. Mamouljian reshot portions of Michael Powell's Gone to Earth (David O. Selznick, 1950), released in the U.S. in 1952 as The Wild Heart. He began filming his stage success, Porgy and Bess (Samuel Goldwyn, 1959), but was replaced again by Otto Preminger. In 1959 he began Cleopatra (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1963) but resigned early in the filming, replaced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Numerous other projects reached various stages of completion but none was ever fully realized.²

In the early years of sound films, Mamoulian was known as a technical innovator. He restored mobility to the camera, which had become static, locked in a cumbersome outer housing. He restored the artistic use of montage, and redefined close-ups, split-screen, and dissolves. Later he earned a reputation for his skill at creating chiaroscuro cinematographic effects. He used more than one camera for shooting a single scene and prompted the use of new lenses when those available were inadequate for creating the effects he wanted.

He revolutionized sound films by developing multitrack sound recording and inventing the voice-over. He also defied convention and created a new way of scoring films. The convention, already established after only a few years of sound films, was to draw on stock soundtracking: suspense music, kissing music, argument music, and so on. Mamoulian went instead to the classics, mainly nineteenth-century romantic orchestral and operatic works by such composers as Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner.

He invented "seamless editing" and directed the first full-length Technicolor film using its new three-color process. He did all of this with the intent of drawing specific psychological responses from the viewer through visual and sound montage and color.

Mamoulian's theatrical career was interrupted only temporarily by the move to Hollywood in 1930. He returned

to Broadway in 1935 to direct Porgy and Bess. Again in New York in 1943, he directed Oklahoma!, followed by Sadie Thompson in 1944, Carousel in 1945, St. Louis Woman in 1946, Leaf and Bough and Lost in the Stars in 1949, and Arms and the Girl in 1950. During these years and shortly after, he supplemented these jobs by directing the Los Angeles, London, and U. S. State Department European tours of his biggest hits from Porgy to Carousel.

In the theatre Mamoulian is known chiefly for integrating the various contributory arts of the American musical, transforming the near variety-show format of musicals (specialty songs, dances, insignificant plots and characters) into a full-blown Gesamtkunstwerk in which plot, character, music, and dance combine to create a dramatic unity. He opened the stage to what would later be termed "the golden age" of the American book musical of the 1950s and '60s.

Whether in film or on stage, musicals Mamoulian directed such as, High, Wide and Handsome, Porgy and Bess, Oklahoma!, or St. Louis Woman, were almost invariably about the American experience. This Armenian from Tiflis who learned English as a seventh language, after Armenian, Russian, Georgian, French, German, and Latin, became synonymous with the dramatization of American folklore and myth.

In 1966 Mamoulian published an updated version of Shakespeare's Hamlet.³ It is similar to what A. L. Rowse, an admirer of Mamoulian's Hamlet, did in his updated versions of Shakespeare's plays; language no longer in common usage was replaced by contemporary words accessible to the modern viewer/reader, all this without any attempt to update or recreate the play in any essential way. Mamoulian also published numerous feature articles on technical filmmaking, on his career throughout its seven decades, and a children's book, Abigayil: The Story of the Cat at the Manger⁴.

In his later years, Mamoulian spent considerable time guest-lecturing at universities and visiting film festivals around the world where his work was being honored. He received numerous awards throughout his career, most notably the D.W. Griffith Award for Lifetime Achievement by the Directors Guild of America in 1984. Mamoulian was a lifelong member of the Guild, originally known as the Screen Directors Guild of America, and active as an officer during its early years. He belonged to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences throughout his film career and was a presenter at the 1931, 1936, and 1937 Academy Awards ceremony. Although he never received an Oscar for his directing, his early films won many Academy Awards for technical achievements and acting. The Gay Desperado won the New York Film Critics Award as well as Grand Prize at the Venice Film

Festival for best picture of 1936. Finally, Mamoulian is a member of the Theatre Hall of Fame preserved in New York's Gershwin Theatre.

Besides his technical innovations, Mamoulian was also innovative in his casting of actors in unconventional roles. For many, these roles became instrumental in their success. Among those whose early careers Mamoulian helped were Fredric March, Sylvia Sidney, Myrna Loy, Henry Fonda, Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, Celeste Holm, Alfred Drake, John Raitt, and William Holden. He is the only filmmaker to have directed both Garbo and Dietrich, and the only director to have failed Laurence Olivier on a screen test.⁵ On a few occasions, Mamoulian worked as a "play doctor," coming in to assist with the direction and rewriting of shows in trouble during their out-of-town tryouts. Two of those shows were St. Louis Woman and The Time of Your Life.

In his private notes dated August 1-8, 1973, Mamoulian stated: "The main theme in my films [is]: Man can overcome the world and embrace truth."⁶ But, as is often the case with Mamoulian, he provides no explanation for this generalization. What world must be overcome? In Mamoulian's life, the world that needed to be overcome was the world of theatre impresarios and film studio bosses whom he engaged in a struggle for authority and control. In his films and plays, this translated into

characters who struggled for power over oppressors or social circumstances.

Mamoulian is equally silent as to what truth man should embrace. Clearly, it is not the truth that results from a careful examination of the social or political exigencies which initiate most of the dramatic conflicts in the works he chose to direct. Mamoulian's characters overcome their world by transcending it, by removing themselves from its grip through the power of love and thought will power.

The truth he alludes to is personal and spiritual, for he was oblivious to political ideologies and theories. He was skeptical of total freedom and democracy. He held a strong faith in Christianity and the power of love to conquer adversity, but he had little interest in the church as an institution. Institutions and hierarchical authority were the forces in the world that had to be overcome, and as such were suspect. Like the celebrities who make their personal lives public, Mamoulian abhorred those who went to church to make a public display of something he considered private, their spirituality.

Mamoulian's belief that art should show men not as they are but as they ought to be is rooted in the Christian-Platonic tradition which shaped his values throughout his life. Such a belief made his work particularly appealing to producers and censors during

the first two decades of his career, but left him increasingly alienated from the Zeitgeist in the last two decades of his career. This was particularly true following the Second World War when many blamed all ideologies as the basis for the destruction suffered and audiences began to demand a different sort of truth from films and plays.

Mamoulian claimed that at age seventeen he rejected the notion of ars gratia artis, "art for art's sake," for what he called "art for life's sake." He was keenly aware of the dialectical relationship between art and society, particularly the mass consumption of any given work of art. Consequently, he expressed strong concerns about the ethos of a work of art and its impact on the world. For him, the most compelling dialectic was between what he called man's animalistic and spiritual natures. He was attracted to dramatic source material where he felt he could express this dialectic and point toward the triumph of the spiritual over the animalistic. It is ironic that Mamoulian characterized this central dialectic in his work in this way as he held animals in much higher esteem than humans. He rhapsodized about the ideal qualities animals possess, putting humans to shame by comparison. Cats, in particular, were an obsession.⁷ They appear in all of his films, like a signature.

Mamoulian saw man locked in a conflict between his baser, animalistic instincts and drives, and his nobler

potential for the spiritual, Platonic notion of love. He felt that the subject matter presented should in some respect dramatize this transcendence. This would uplift people, he thought, and give them hope. He feared what he increasingly saw as society's regression into atavism. For him, economics had failed, politics had failed, even organized religion had failed to prevent conflict and destruction in the world. The only hope was in the arts. He saw in art the ability to span differences and cross cultural barriers. He believed art could unite people by eliciting an appreciation of beauty and love. Publicly he never explained or defended this notion. Whenever he lectured on his career in later years he simply repeated the maxim about economics, religion, and politics having failed. In private, his writings indicate something not fully articulated, but more substantial than his public utterances. Still, this may betray a naïveté more revealing of his ego in his appraisal of the impact of his own art on the world than any understanding of the dialectic between art and society, let alone politics or economics.

Mamoulian shunned politics and gave the impression of not having been terribly aware of the political complexities of the world. Yet, acknowledged or not, there is political content to his work. The Broadway theatre and, to a greater extent, the Hollywood entertainment film are powerful political tools in

disseminating cultural values. They serve an important regulating function in a free society. Arguably, social cohesion and bourgeois values are maintained in capitalistic societies through such indoctrination, making the commercial theatre and film industry the truly political ones. His vision of "art for life's sake" was one that would reaffirm the more positive aspirations of the status quo and work to offset any tendency toward the atavism of which he despaired.

We shall see that below the social politics of "art for life's sake" lie more primary sexual politics. This, I contend, is ultimately the basis for all of Mamoulian's work and accounts for both the subject matter and the mode of presentation that ultimately characterize the essence of the Mamoulian opus.

Mamoulian's other credo, as he quoted often from Buffon, was "Le style c'est l'homme lui-meme"--"style is the man himself." Discussion of style, as distinct from manner, will be important to this analysis of the Mamoulian career. In drawing on the notion of style as a framework for interpolating history from the available fragments, I refer to Arthur Danto's The Transfiguration of the Commonplace:

. . . what we mean by style are those qualities of representations which are the man himself, seen from the outside physiognomically. And the reason that there cannot be knowledge or art for style, though there can be for manner, is that the outward aspects of representations are not commonly given to the man whose representations they are: he views the world through them, but not them. The qualities of his

representations are for others to see, not him, and the presence of knowledge or art exactly presupposes that externalization which is inconsistent with them being his style. Thus to be style they have to be expressed immediately and spontaneously. . . . What, then, is interesting and essential in art is the spontaneous ability the artist has of enabling us to see his way of seeing the world. . . .⁸

Mamoulian himself stated the distinction between style and manner this way:

Style in terms of all arts is the personal viewpoint of the creator--rampant fallacy which confuses mannerisms with style--style is what and how you feel about the world, life, and man--how you see it--the world as it is with the ever present implication of the world as you would like it to be.⁹

Style is the essence of as well as the channel through which the relationships between life and art are played out. Everything becomes transformed into the aesthetic. What cannot be is ignored or denied.

Mamoulian's idea of "art for life's sake," like each of the ideas raised so far, becomes more meaningful when considered autobiographically. How "art for life's sake" also takes on a reciprocal meaning for Mamoulian as an individual is also important to examine. His life was devoted not only to creating art, but to deliberately creating himself and his life as an art; an art of living. He was his own creation and the presentation of the self was as deliberately calculated as the creation of any theatrical staging or film.

Mamoulian was adept at storytelling both in art and in life. The central theme in his art and his life, as he describes it--to overcome the world and embrace truth--

extends to the telling of his own history, reflecting a belief in the ability to alter that history through stylized presentation. The truth as he and those he manipulated present it reflects an idealization of that history and raises numerous questions about historiography. Insights into historiography unfold by examining the various dialectical relationships between Mamoulian and his artistic creations, the censors, his co-workers, producers, and his audience, in addition to examination of the dialectical nature of the major themes within his work; ones he articulates, like that between the animalistic and the spiritual, and ones he does not, like that between the public and the private self. There you have the major points for investigation in this dissertation.

Innumerable reviews, interviews, and feature articles have been written on Mamoulian. But, to date, there is only one published volume on his films, Mamoulian, by Tom Milne,¹⁰ and two unpublished dissertations, "The Stage and Film Career of Rouben Mamoulian" by William Joseph Becvar,¹¹ and "The Broadway Directing Career of Rouben Mamoulian" by Bennett T. Oberstein.¹² These writings provide basic background on Mamoulian's career.

The information from which this inquiry is conducted remains fragmentary. Currently unavailable archival documents from still-classified F. B. I. files, from

Mamouljian's estate, still in probate, and from continued interviewing offer possibilities for further study.

Chapter 1: EARLY INFLUENCES

Rouben Mamoulian was born October 8, 1897, in Tiflis (now Tbilisi, capital of Soviet Georgia)¹, and was raised in a wealthy Armenian home. His father, Zachary Mamoulian (1866-1966), was an officer in the Czar's army until he married Virginia Kalantarian (1876-1972), daughter of a wealthy banker and landowner, who took his new son-in-law into his business. Zachary quickly rose to the position of director. Mamoulian said very little about his early life, and what he was willing to reveal in interviews and lectures was an almost verbatim repetition. Andrew Sarris concurs on this point, "Among film and stage directors, he is extraordinarily precise in his interviews."² He knew exactly what he wanted to present about his background: very little.

In his unpublished "Notes From the Desk Pad," Mamoulian wrote about communication in general, "Communication has moved the world toward conformity. It hasn't helped mutual understanding, rather the contrary."³ He had no respect for celebrities who revealed everything about themselves in biographies or on

TV talk shows. He always contended stars must have mystery about them.

The story, as he told it, confirms that his father was indeed a former officer in the Czar's army who later became a bank president; his mother was head of the Armenian theatre in Tiflis. The Mamoulian home was the scene of frequent receptions where actors, writers, and other artists gathered. Mrs. Mamoulian, on occasion, even performed in fund-raising benefits, as the pursuit of a professional acting career was out of the question for the wife of one of the leaders of Tiflis' Armenian community. For some unspecified reason, the Mamoulians moved to Paris when Rouben was a boy. There, he attended the Lycée Montaigne for four or six years, depending on which story one accepts.⁴ He learned to speak fluent French. He developed an interest in Napoleon and became an avid reader of the weekly serial, "Les Aventures de Buffalo Bill," which he claimed was largely responsible for his great interest in America, an interest that would later lead him to choose coming to America over a very appealing career opportunity in Paris. He went so far as to say that he was brought up on American and British authors: Twain, Dickens, Jack London.⁵ As for Napoleon, this was an early example of what would become a lifelong infatuation with greatness and great men.

However many years Mamoulian actually spent in Paris, one of the years he must have been there was 1906.

He tells of a time when his mother, who organized a relief effort for the victims of the San Francisco earthquake, received a telegram of appreciation from President Theodore Roosevelt.

Without ever explaining why his family moved to Paris, he also offered no explanation for the family's return to Tiflis or precisely when these events took place. Upon returning to Russia, Mamoulian attended gymnasium and then went on to two years of university study in criminal law at Moscow University.⁶ The choice of criminal law was a compromise with his parents between his dream of a career in the theatre and their hope that he would become an engineer. While at Moscow University he saw a notice posted calling for students interested in attending evening classes at the Moscow Art Theatre under Evgeny Vakhtangov. Mamoulian at various times says he attended these classes for either three or five months, again, depending on the version. He claims to have met Stanislavsky but not to have known him. No details of this meeting were ever provided.

From here the account diverges. In some versions, he says he left Moscow before finishing his studies because of the Revolution. He says he returned to Tiflis where he started a theatre troupe and wrote theatre reviews for a local newspaper. When political instability shook the Caucasus region, he went to visit his sister who was then living in London. In other accounts his departure from

Moscow is unexplained and the duration of his stay there vague. In either case, he returned to Tiflis and then went on to London, In certain versions, the Revolution took place while he was in London. In others the sequence of events is unspecified. In all accounts he conveyed an impression of having missed the Revolution altogether. However much of the Revolution he did or did not witness, when the subject came up in interviews he had no comment to make on the subject. The only impact of the Revolution he admitted to was the termination of his allowance from home.

After various failed attempts at supporting himself, Mamoulian was having lunch with his friend Grigori Macaroff, the reknowned bass of the Petersburg Opera. Macaroff was in London putting together a chauve souris-type company to tour England. Macaroff was looking for a director, and Mamoulian said he knew of a very good one--himself. Macaroff laughed at the idea saying that the company would never accept him because of his youth (he puts his age at the time as twenty-two or twenty-four, depending on the version being recounted.) Mamoulian suggested he be hired without pay until a more suitable director could be found. Macaroff agreed to this and, as Mamoulian tells it, after three days he and the performers fell in love with one another. Then at the fourth, sixth, and seventh days of rehearsal, the manager of the St. James Theatre, Alexander Nethersole, and the

playwright Austin Page (actually Obermeyer), who had been sitting in the back of the room in the former Czar's embassy where the rehearsals were taking place, asked Mamoulian if he would be interested in co-directing Page's new play The Beating at the Door, which had a Russian setting. Mamoulian was thrilled at the chance, but, not wanting to give away his enthusiasm, asked to read the script first. He says it was a terrible play, but the opportunity was too good to turn down. The part of this story that Mamoulian always made special mention of was a contractual clause stipulating that when asked his age he would answer "around thirty."

As might be expected with someone of Mamoulian's accomplishments, the term "genius" was often applied by those who knew him and had worked with him. But for no one did the label hold greater fascination than for Mamoulian himself. The fascination with genius would remain a major theme throughout his life. It played an important part in his creation of the self and was an impression he had a great need to convey in this presentation of the self. After the childhood infatuation with Napoleon, the fascination with genius extended to the "great men" of art, music, literature, and philosophy: Socrates, Jesus, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare. Mamoulian was in great awe of history's geniuses.⁷ Anyone who had not attained the stature of genius in history was not worth knowing about.

In a 1975 tribute to Mamoulian at the University of Southern California, for example, in a post-screening discussion of the wide-screen format of Cinemascope, Panavision 90, Todd-AO and the like, in vogue during the late nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties, Mamoulian, for whom filmmaking was most akin to the art of painting, challenged the audience to come up with a great painter who had succeeded in creating a great work of art using a canvas of such distorted proportions. A student rebounded with "the Triptych of Hieronymous Bosch." Mamoulian mumbled "who?" a few times and then, seeming unaware of who Bosch was, said "tell me the name of a great painter."⁸

Mamoulian's private papers consist in large part of lists; particularly, lists of the great men of history and their accomplishments, all in encyclopedic format for some book that was never written. There are also lists of the great people he had met throughout his life,⁹ and lists of great people he claimed owed the great successes in their careers to some help he had given them.¹⁰ Added to these is a list of people he calls "turn downs," great people he rejected.¹¹ All these lists are never more than that--lists. They read like hundreds of pages of drafts for some endless index of all-time greatest achievement awards.¹²

Continuing with Mamoulian's story of The Beating at the Door, he always made a point of what a successful

playwright Page was, having just completed a three-and-a-half year run with the play By Pigeon Post. Mamoulian also made a point of indicating the stature of the actors cast in The Beating at the Door, an all-star cast including Arthur Wontner, Franklyn Dyal, Athole Stewart, Doris Lloyd, and Mary Jerrold. For many years Mamoulian would never mention his co-director's name. Finally, in a 1984 American Film Institute seminar, Mamoulian referred to him as "Mr. Edwards."¹³ This Edwards was "about sixty-five years old"¹⁴ and, along with the cast, was uncooperative because of Mamoulian's youth. They continually addressed Mamoulian as "old chap" and as he would recount "no one can snub you as well as the English when they feel like it. They snubbed me so bad I can still remember it."¹⁵ Mamoulian recalls that neither man knew who was to do what as co-directors so Edwards suggested that they each take an act of the play, rehearse it for three days and put it together. At the end of this trial-period, Mamoulian recalls they came together and their approaches were so different it was clear there was no way they could work together. Mamoulian explained his concept to the producers, whom he says were in agreement with his approach. However, being the younger man, Mamoulian decided the proper thing to do would be for him to withdraw from the project. He went on to say that three days later the producers came to him and reinstated him as sole director, having let Edwards

go. Mamoulian described his troubles with his all-star cast the first three days of rehearsal.

As in most Mamoulian stories, there is a recounting of how he was confronted with intransigence by powerful authority figures who almost, as if by magic, he placates and wins over as no one had been able to do in the past. This confrontation always takes the form of a showdown in which Mamoulian would risk his job in return for his "adversary" allowing him to do things his way. From the start, Mamoulian insisted on total control of any project in which he was involved. He preferred to take risks and enjoy all of the credit for success or failure of an endeavor. The director must be king. For Mamoulian, the idea of theatre or film as the integration of various art forms did not embody the idea of an organic outgrowth resulting from a collaboration of the various contributing artists influencing one another. Rather, the integrated unity came from the sole vision of the director whose job it was to realize this vision through his winning the cooperation of others to his vision. And Mamoulian could be extremely skillful at securing cooperation with his will through gallantry, charm, impressive intellectual prowess, and taste. In fact, as time went on, he would point to this willingness of collaborative artists and management he had worked with as one of the signs of their greatness, of their true

stardom. A case in point was a comment he made about George Gershwin:

It seems to me that this sense of exaggerated modesty in artists is highly overrated by people. It is made out to be a saintly virtue where frequently it is actually nothing but masked vanity and conceit. Very often people who seem so modest about their work would all but tear you to pieces if you suggested cutting anything out of what they had written, considering every word of it as well-nigh sacred. Yet George, who loved his own stuff as much as he did, never hesitated to make any cuts that were necessary. Porgy and Bess as performed in New York was almost forty-five minutes shorter than the original score. He did this because he had no false vanity about his work and also because George was one of the best showmen I have ever known.¹⁶

Such a submission on his own part would have been viewed as a compromise, a betrayal of one's self, of one's vision as an artist. "A true artist can only do things his way, use his intuition, his own taste and inclinations."¹⁷ Mamoulian intended what was true of the solo artist--the writer, the painter, the sculptor--should also be true of the director. This necessitated a hierarchy of artists with himself as the undisputed chief.

The experience with The Beating at the Door provided his first case in point. After three days of challenge by the actors to his new role as sole director, he was able to get them to cooperate. Mamoulian achieved this by breaking the actors down, rehearsing them exhaustively until their resistance to him gave way, and they succumbed to his authority. The confrontations that Mamoulian cared to share in public when discussing his

life were only those that always ended with "and we fell in love with each other." Later on I will present some instances in the Mamouliau storybook that do not always end with "and we fell in love with each other." In the instance of The Beating at the Door, he apparently got his way, which he attests to by the receiving of pipes from five different members of the cast after having broken his during rehearsal. (Mamouliau was universally remembered by those who knew him as a chain-smoker of gigantic cigars, to which he graduated after the youthful pipe smoking.)

Mamouliau points to this production as having given him the opportunity to work in the naturalistic style of the Moscow Art Theatre. But it was here he discovered that it did not suit him. He thereafter abandoned it for what he called "stylization." He points to a scene in which the actors chopped real wood on stage as an illustration. He sees naturalism as the absence of style rather than another style in its own right. Other than this, we hear virtually nothing about the production itself.

On the basis of this work the next step in the career Mamouliau speaks of was an invitation by Jacques Hébertot, head of the Théâtre de Champs Elysées complex of three theatres, to become one of its three directors along with Feodor Kommissarjevsky and Louis Jouvet. Hébertot, who supposedly saw The Beating at the Door,

invited Mamoulian to come to Paris to speak with him. Mamoulian says he flew to Paris to meet with Hébertot.¹⁸ At this point Mamoulian treats us to another story about the surprising youth of this genius. Hébertot expected Mamoulian to be an older gentleman and asked to see his father when Mamoulian presented himself. Mamoulian insisted that he was the man Hébertot had called for. After getting over the initial shock, Hébertot sat down and chatted with Mamoulian. One meeting led to another and, on the sixth day, he was presented with a contract. Mamoulian says he returned to his hotel room with the contract.¹⁹ Upon arrival at his hotel, a telegram "about six feet long" was waiting for him from George Eastman. The telegram stated that Eastman was organizing an American opera company in Rochester, to perform in English with emphasis on dramatic action. Mamoulian never mentions the specific terms of the contract but states that they included salary, time off, and other particulars, and that if interested, he must answer immediately and sail for New York within two weeks. Torn between the two offers, Mamoulian said he returned to Hébertot, leaning toward the offer from Eastman. He said it was the memory of Buffalo Bill that drew him to America. Mamoulian says Hébertot pleaded with him not to go to that country of savages, that he could never be happy there, and to prove how sure he was of this he proposed to keep his offer to Mamoulian open should

things not work out in Rochester. And the rest, as Mamouljian says, is history.

Or is it? Let us backtrack a bit and add some new details. Among the effects that survived confiscation by Mamouljian's legal guardian at the time of his death, the County of Los Angeles, was a handwritten diary/autobiography of Mamouljian's mother, Virginia Kalantarian Mamouljian. References made in the diary indicate it was written sometime between 1963 and 1966, after the release of the film Cleopatra, yet before the death of her husband Zachary. The diary is the outpouring of a very unhappy, frustrated, and decidedly narcissistic woman. She never mentions dates in relating the incidents of her life, and there is never really a sense of "the other" in her writing. Only she seems to exist. There is no sense of anything outside of her--her needs, her achievements, her victimization. She appears to have been passionate and generous, but immature and utterly self-obsessed. Child-like is the word that comes to mind throughout. Her assessment of events and relationships often deteriorate into such self-pity that her account of what transpired may not deserve unqualified acceptance. But it is extremely revealing of the psychology of a figure whose influence on her son's career was probably greater than any other single factor. Writing as she does, near the end of her very long life, she complains of feeling abandoned by a husband whom she was never close to, who

could never understand her, and who from early in the marriage was a philanderer. She devotes much of the diary to her "beloved Rouben," whose marriage late in life she calls a tragic mistake. And because of his "monstrous" wife, she writes she only sees her son for a few minutes at a time on rare occasions. Because her son was such a genius, she was often asked to write about her child-rearing methods. But she couldn't. Instead, she laments how deserted she feels by Rouben, having long ago given up on her husband.²⁰

The worst blow for Virginia Mamouljian, a still profoundly painful wound, was the loss of her daughter Svetlana more than forty years earlier. Of her many years in Hollywood with husband and son she says, "Beautiful America took away all noble feelings, feelings of closeness and human moods. They only dream about dollars and their own interests. . . .I think that neither my husband nor my son understand or know me."²¹ With this she begins the story of her life.

She was born January 20 (January 7 in the old Julian calendar), 1876, in the resort area called Selal-Ogly, which is now called Stepanavan. She tells of the dacha, or summer villa, her father Georgy (Egor) Tazhanich Kalantarov owned there, with its twenty-four rooms, several kitchens, gardens, and horse stables. She describes the beauty of the area with its picturesque views, medicinal waters, greenhouses, flowers,

perfumeries, and beautiful climate. She says her father was the cousin of a nobleman, the famous Loris Melicova.²² She describes his good looks: "a handsome man, tall man, well built with big blue eyes and greek nose." He was educated at Tiflis seminary and she speaks of his intelligence, nobility, and kindness; how he helped many to get jobs at his bank and of the many people he helped during times of famine when he opened his granaries to the poor. He apparently loaned out money quite often, frequently not getting paid back. His capital ventures were heavily in real estate and he even owned lands that were rented out to the church. Mrs. Mamoulian describes her father's cheese factory as his best property.

Virginia Kalantarian's mother was Tazhbenk Melicova Shushanina Mironovna. She was uneducated but intelligent. Mironovna was fifteen when she married Kalantarov, who was twenty-one. She also had a kind and generous nature, always ready to sacrifice for others, although she was not above chasing after thieves with a revolver. She is described as tall, skinny, with a pretty face and kind eyes. Her daughter describes her as simple. She had a house full of servants but preferred doing the housework herself. They had twelve children of whom five survived, two girls and three boys. Virginia never says anything about her siblings. She does remark that for some unfathomable reason she was not the favorite daughter and

her father, whom she adored and idolized, "said to me quite often: 'you should have been a boy to help me.'"

Mrs. Mamouljian's recollections of childhood beyond these descriptions consist exclusively of stories about school experiences. She never writes about her home life. She loved school and was something of a teacher's pet. She missed no opportunity to write about how bright she was, praised by one teacher after another for her talent and good behavior. She was placed academically ahead of other children her age and showed an early talent for drawing and dance. At first she attended an Armenian school but soon transferred to the best Russian school in the city. On her long walk to school each day she passed a church, where she would kiss the doors and turn a stone if she saw a church official. She believed the old superstition that church officials bring misfortune, and she did not want to get any bad grades. By the age of fourteen she no longer believed seriously in the church.

Virginia Mamouljian frequently mentions the persecution of Armenians and other "foreigners" by the Russian authorities. In school, in spite of discrimination, she was always the best in every class. As for school-mates, the only one mentioned is a girl, an eighth grader whom Virginia was in love with and to whom she gave a bouquet of flowers. The girl put the flowers away in the school desk. This surprised and upset Virginia, who could not understand why she was so

unappreciated--a theme that runs throughout her narrative--be it by family or friends. Strangers manage to appreciate her, but those closest to her never do.

Virginia describes her parents as very strict when it came to the subject of men. Proper female behavior required never raising her voice or looking at men. Even "the walls have eyes to see," so one should keep one's gaze straight ahead at all times. She relates several anecdotes about her great interest in and popularity with boys, and her attempts to circumvent her parents' strictures and socialize with them. By the age of fifteen she was receiving marriage proposals by way of her parents. Of the latter, she complains that they were deciding her fate without her.

In that summer when Virginia was fifteen, the Kalantarov family moved into a new villa in Abastuman. In Abastuman there was an impressive outdoor rotunda, curative baths, many military officers, and dancing. Mrs. Mamoulian refers to the many compliments she was showered with by these men at the dances despite being under the constant supervision of her mother. She says that her parents determined that a husband be found for her at this time, the age at which Madame Kalantarian had been betrothed. Virginia's image of the suitable spouse was a skinny man with pale complexion, an expressive, artistic face, but not too good-looking, intelligent with a strong character, well-mannered, and affectionate. He must not

have a beard. The favorite name for a husband would be "Rouben." Her father wished that she marry a doctor or an engineer, but she insisted he be an officer. She liked the good manners of an officer. Finally, a friend of the family recommended a twenty-six year old officer from Abastuman to her parents. "I married a man named Zachary with a beard and a mustache. . . . I wanted and could love a man platonically, at a distance. I never wanted (even now) my loved one not dressed, or barefoot. I never wanted him to be rude, only affectionate and good mannered. . . . I grew attached to my husband and I can say that I almost loved him. . . . To my great surprise and dismay he was not affectionate. I have never felt any kindness from him, although by nature I am affectionate."

"He was not even kind to children. Only then I began to dislike officers and only then became convinced that most officers were not kind and they only possessed good appearance and glittering uniforms."

"However, my husband was an honorable man and we lived together like friends."

Once married, "I loved to dream to fly into a different world of beauty. I loved flowers. Big white flowers. They reminded me of my dream, my innocence and purity. . . . Even when they withered I did not throw them away for a long time. I felt that they feel the pain and suffer. I loved and still love animals, especially back home where they are not treated like here

[America]." Her son Rouben would also develop a passion for flowers and animals.

After a year of marriage, Zachary Mamoulian left the military and went to work at Kalantarov's bank, the Second Mutual Credit Bank, where he rose rapidly to the position of director. In addition to the bank position, Kalantarov provided the young couple with a house, an ongoing supply of cheese, wood, and "everything you could think of." Virginia has hardly a kind word to say of her husband, but of his mother she speaks glowingly. Virginia says the elder Mrs. Mamoulian's two children had not inherited her warmth and affection. It was the elder Mrs. Mamoulian who, Virginia says, urged her son to love his wife more; who stood by her daughter-in-law when, already early on in the marriage, Zachary would be missing from home for days at a time seeing other women. This is also the grandmother Kato (Katherine or Kate) whom Rouben Mamoulian writes of so fondly in his private papers and whom he credits with having had a most profound impact on his life.

It was around this time, during her first year of marriage, that Virginia Mamoulian started to become active in the theatre. Her first exposure to the theatre was at age twelve when a woman neighbor, V. A. Makvelov, an avid opera-goer, brought her to the theatre. Her first play, in Armenian, was entitled Vartan Mamikoyan and she describes her experience:

I did not know that the curtain would rise and I thought that the prompter's cabin on the stage was a border between two warring camps. I also thought that on one side Armenians would be fighting their enemies. I began to open my eyes with my fingers, my heart was beating wildly. I was very impatient. When will the play begin? When the curtains opened I had an impression so strong that I did not see anything. It was as if I needed another pair of eyes to see all the decorations, costumes and actors. . . . From that day on nothing interested me but theatre.

Madame Makvelov accompanied Virginia to the theatre frequently, often surreptitiously as Kalantarov thought it inappropriate for a child to be attending the theatre, this immoral place, with such frequency. The infatuation and curiosity with everything about the theatre never went away. As a young bride with her husband's consent, Virginia Mamoulian realized a lifelong dream of appearing on the stage. She describes it as the start of a new life. She tells us that her first role was that of the lead, Stepanida, in a play called Slaves of Gold. This led to other leading parts--Luisa in Love and Trickery, Amalen in Life of a Player, Sasha in Not Born Without Honor. Other plays included Evening Twilight, Poor in Spirit, Betrayal, Golden Eve, Anger of the Day, Beyond the Ocean, Innocent Are Guilty, and Madame X. From the titles one may assume these to be typical melodramas of the day, performed in Armenian. Mrs. Mamoulian repeatedly points out the stature of her roles and the success she had in them. She mentions that she performed under pseudonyms which she frequently had to change in order to keep her parents from finding out what she was doing.

Gradually, however, news got out but, being married now, her parents could take no disciplinary action.

It is unclear whether these were amateur or professional performances. She boasts about her successes as if they were important starring roles in professional productions, but it was a stage manager of an amateur Armenian troupe who persuaded her take on the first role. Certainly she was an amateur when she began acting, and to have a starring role having never acted before would lead one to conclude that the troupe was, indeed, amateur. On the other hand, the need to use pseudonyms for fear of recognition in charity fund-raising amateur performances seems a bit odd. The answer may lie somewhere in between. This troupe later travelled to Paris to perform, indicating the seriousness of the troupe if, indeed, it was amateur. This sort of troupe was common in Europe at the time. The distinction between professional and amateur was less relevant than it is today. Many of the most influential movements in theatre on the continent were brought about by what today we would term amateur theatre groups.

She says she was encouraged by many to develop her skills further by formally studying acting and abandon everything for the theatre. At the age of twenty-one, after five years of marriage, she gave birth to a son and gave him the name she had once dreamed for her husband--Rouben. She speaks of her love for her son, and the

daughter, Svetlana, who followed two years later. She also speaks of her stern approach to raising them, in the manner in which she herself had been raised. Unlike her own mother, she was not content to do the servants' housework for them. She describes these early years in the theatre as the best of times. She routinely came home very late at night. On the stage, an actor named M. Ambar-Zumian always played the leading men, her lovers, to her leading ladies. She describes him as a strong and wonderful actor. This would not be the first time she would be torn between the love of her children with the accompanying respectability of home, and the passion of her life in the theatre. In a way, because of her husband's mutual wanderings, the young Mamoulian couple were both able to satisfy their conflicting needs and live double lives with a kind of unconventional tolerance and mutual consent.

In his unpublished notes years later, Rouben Mamoulian recalled his experiences during this period. These notes mainly offer fragments of incidents such as hallucinations of black devils' faces trying to get through the glass transom over the door at age one; a description of "living in two worlds, the visible and the hidden--the hidden being the strongest. Fancies re[garding] spirits, secret powers and presences--the woman dentist and the kidnapping." What these refer to go unexplained, but the dichotomy between the two worlds

would be a notion sustained throughout his life. As a director he would declare a dislike for realism in art because it, in his view, showed what was obvious and accessible to everyone all around. Art should reveal what is hidden. He felt stylization, as he described it, did this.

Further, he cites a memory from one-and-a-half years of age in his "mother's arms in a horse carriage driving to the railway station--the sound of horse hooves on the dirt road and the crossing a wooden bridge." He goes on to say that since that memory the sound of horses' hooves were "sheer music to him, especially, the sound at night." He also recalls at age two an incident in which a policeman in the park was particularly cruel to a chicken: a blind horse that was worked to death; the smell of horses, oats, hide, leather, and stables filled with various carriages; gathering fireflies at night and bunching them together "into a glowing jewel"; the thrill of a first donkey ride. He remembers waking up when the two millstones in a watermill stopped revolving.

It was this memory that led him to realize the power of sudden silence and its shock value as great as sudden noise.²³ He would use such awareness to great effect years later in his direction of the play Wings Over Europe when, to create tension in a scene where government leaders had assembled at a meeting at 10 Downing Street. The future survival of the world is held

in their hands when threatened by a blackmailer with an atomic weapon, the tension is created by a silence; a silence finally broken by the click of a cigarette case to the beat of an increasingly audible clock ticking.

From his early memories we see into the world that shaped him; an awareness of sight and sound in nature, of human behavior, and of values. We also see the active imagination of a precocious child.

A story about Grandma Kate figures prominently in his memories at this point. About her he says,

Everybody in the Mamoulia clan was known in the country only in his or her relation to Grandma Kate. My father was known as Kate's son; my mother, as Kate's daughter-in-law; myself, as her other grandchildren, was known as Kate's grandson. This was actually the main reason that all the villagers treated us with respect approaching reverence. . . . People gathered in large groups in the evening to sit at the feet of my grandmother and to listen to one of her marvelous stories. These were always most exciting and interesting, and everybody enjoyed them hugely. But there was more to it than that. Each of her stories seemed to have a marvelous built-in idea which stayed with you for always. It was a kind of spiritual vitamin that Grandma Kate evolved her story about. Later you found yourself pondering the point she made, and, like a seed, it seemed to grow within you and give you help, courage and a lift when you most needed it.²⁴

This was what he himself tried to do years later in his theatre and film work through the stories these works tell, and also in the way he would communicate to actors in the rehearsal process. He would not only tell stories as she did, but would, at times, tell her stories. One story more than any other that had this special impact on

Mamouljian was an incident that occurred when he was seven:

When I was seven years old, my sister and four cousins and I were having bread and milk one summer evening with grandmother at her house in the Caucasian village of Muchrani. Kato Babo (Grandma Kate), as everyone called her, loved her village as she loved her family. "She knows all the angels," smiling villagers would say.

As we chattered around the big dining table, we heard a knock. Grandmother went to the window and drew the curtains.

Out of the dark a young woman's white face grinned insanely, nose flattened against the glass, two hands upraised. We children screamed in horror.

Grandma Kate swept out of the house, put her arm around the trembling creature, talked with her and gently walked her down the path. Then grandmother returned to the dining table.

"Children, children," she chided us, "why were you afraid of that poor mad girl? She belongs to our village, and needs friends." Grandma Kate looked at me, the oldest. "Remember, if you fill your heart with love, you'll have no room for fear."

A few days later, we children were playing in the garden. Suddenly an enormous dog, dragging its chain, leaped through the bushes. I recognized the neighbor's watch-dog, trained for killing. The little ones froze in fright.

I, too, felt panicky, until I recalled grandmother's words. Could I fill my heart with love for this monster? At least I managed to look him in the eye and talk softly. The growling ceased. The huge dog scampered like a puppy and licked my face.

In every crisis in my life, Grandma Kate's advice has worked. If you love something enough, be it your work or the people you meet, there's no room for fear.²⁵

In this story we not only get a feeling for the world from which he came, but also a first example of the kind of confrontation and his approach to it that we saw in his experience with The Beating at the Door, one that would replay itself repeatedly throughout his career and personal life. He encountered many monsters whom he appeased by speaking to softly. Doing so he would often

get through these situations with "and we all fell in love with one another." In his children's book of many years later, Abigayil: The Story of the Cat at the Manger, Mamoulian uses the nativity story to deal with a favorite subject--cats--while basically retelling this childhood memory. Mamoulian details some other incidents when he was able to make use of this advice from Kato Babo. The reader also cannot help but notice the ego aggrandizement in the following passage:

I was a callow youth of 21 who wanted to be a stage director. A producer offered me the chance to co-direct a play with a famous director. Unknown, a foreigner and broke, I quit after two days. Teamwork is impossible in directing a play and I knew directing was my first love. Therefore, whatever the consequences, I must not fear.

A week later the producer wired me he had paid off my co-director and the job was mine. Despite the usual rehearsal headaches, I now had the confidence, right or wrong, to direct in my own way. Kato Babo had been right. Complete love does indeed cast out fear.

Three years later, I was settled at Rochester, New York, as director of the George Eastman Theatre and School. I felt I was ready for Broadway, even though Times Square producers had just rebuffed me during a job-hunting trip. Mr. Eastman sensibly pointed out that I was too young, I was a foreigner, I should stay where I had the life-long security of Eastman's backing.

That night I had a dream. I dreamed I was crossing an abyss as deep as Grand Canyon, walking rotten planks that floated in space. Nightmare panic seized me. Then I saw Kato Babo walking confidently toward me.

"Don't be afraid," she said, "walk on air, come to the other side."

Next day I told Eastman I must leave the Rochester nest and try Broadway. It wasn't easy, but the end result was my chance to direct the play "Porgy," and find my niche.

In 1942 the Theatre Guild had a play script, "Green Grow the Lilacs," which they wanted to transform into a musical comedy. They offered me a contract just to direct.

I refused. From the Rochester days, I'd dreamed of an integrated production--music, dancing, dialogue, action and singing--a truly American theatre. It would be a popular art growing up from vaudeville and burlesque rather than a watered-down ballet-opera.

In "Green Grow the Lilacs" I saw my opportunity. I persuaded the Guild to let me do the job my way. To my usual one-paragraph contract, another was added: I would "direct the whole production in all its elements."

At the New Haven try-out, the opinion of everyone--Lawrence Langner, Theresa Helburn, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Agnes de Mille--was unanimous: we were headed for disaster. I was really shaken, couldn't sleep, lost 12 pounds. Could I be right against all this expert opinion?

Again I recalled Kato Babo's words. "If you love something enough, there's no room for fear." In Boston, before the Broadway opening, I made my decision.

"Look," I told them, "I will give up the most of all. If this show flops I'll never direct on the stage again."

I went further. I threw out Agnes de Mille's final ballet. I told Rodgers and Hammerstein we needed instead a rousing choral number with the whole company singing and dancing.

"Go write something," I demanded of "the boys," and they did. I staged it in half an hour. It was the O*K*L*A*H*O*M*A* show-stopper. "Oklahoma!" opened on Broadway, and the rest is history. Critics have termed it my most important contribution to the theatre, a revolutionary hit.

Today I am in Hollywood directing the film version of "Porgy and Bess." But without Grandma Kate's advice, then and now, to sustain me in what I loved, who knows?²⁶

Unfortunately things did not work out so well on that film. Detailed discussion of that episode will follow in a later chapter, and it will provide a powerful illustration of how this method of confrontation adopted in childhood both served him, propelling him to take the risks which led to his successes, but also led to the self-destruction of his career.

Other childhood experiences that influenced the career include a grammar school class in physics, probably while in Tiflis, where the teacher told the class ". . . when a regiment of soldiers crosses a stone bridge it is always ordered to break step, because if it walked in step, the power of its rhythmic vibration would destroy the bridge. It stuck in my mind that rhythm can have a great power: if it can destroy, it can also build."²⁷ This idea would become central to Mamoulian's approach to directing with its focus on rhythmic movement and the rhythm in the mise-en-scène. It also illustrates an ontological dualism that will also become central to Mamoulian's world-view--where opposing forces of being co-exist; the destructive and the constructive, the animalistic and the spiritual, the natural and the artificial. Man always has freedom to choose between opposing forces. It is the drama of this conflict that the Mamoulian work depicts. And it is the artist's obligation to point the audience toward the correct choice.

Some lesser memories that come to life later on in his work are a story from Grandma Kate of a young girl whose lace handkerchief blows across the sea and lands in the lap of a prince. This story provided the inspiration for part of the opening sequence in the film Love Me Tonight, just as other childhood experiences would find their way onto the screen years later. These include

memories of having sat up with pillows in the fork of a favorite tree reading books at the summer dacha which would be recomposed for We Live Again, and memories of watching cavalrymen in the Caucasus train cutting off clay heads with a sabre turned up in the opening sequence of The Mark of Zorro.

If the experience Mamoulian describes with the mad woman at Kato Babo's house indeed took place when he was seven years old, then it would have been not long after that the Mamoulians went to Paris for a two-year stay. Whenever Mamoulian speaks about the length of time the family spent in Paris, the duration is somewhat vague, but always meant to give the impression of spanning most of his lycée or grade-school years. Virginia specifies the time spent in Paris as two years.²⁸ The reason for the stay is never explained by her son, but she credits it to a tour of her Armenian theatre troupe which also took them through Vienna. She says her father supported them during this stay. Zachary studied animal husbandry at an institute and jurisprudence at university while she took speech and drawing lessons. Summers were spent in Switzerland. The children were sent to school. The first year they lived on Rue Monique; the second year on Montparnasse, No. 128, near the writer Shirvadze. The experience expanded everyone's horizons.

During this stay the absences of Zachary Mamoulian became especially painful for his wife. She tried to

follow him one time only to find out that while pretending to leave the house to go to classes in jurisprudence, he was in fact off with a woman from Medoc. A local landlady on the outskirts of the city where she followed him clued her into the ongoing affair.

The fund-raising efforts of Mrs. Mamouljian in Paris on behalf of the earthquake victims of San Francisco in 1906 are corroborated in her diary, and even more importantly, the letter of appreciation which she received from President Roosevelt would enable Zachary and Virginia Mamouljian to emigrate to America years later after quotas would have otherwise made it impossible.

The stay in Paris ended when Mrs. Mamouljian received news of her father's death. The Mamoulians immediately returned to Tiflis. The Kalanatarovs had familial burial grounds in a place called Ardvi some distance from Tiflis, complete with family mausoleum, a private church, "Suri Odah," and a house. A group of twenty-five people assembled for the journey which involved taking a train to a place called Somain Station, and continuing on horseback down a mountain, through some fields. Soon after the horseback caravan departed Somain Station, the funeral party were surrounded by bandits who were "armed to the teeth." The entire party were robbed and Madame Kalantarian was taken hostage along with a family friend, Sidrak Abovyan. The bandits, like everyone in the area, knew the Kalantarov family and said that they had nothing

against them personally, but that they needed money desperately to get out of the country. Later on in the account of this event, Mrs. Mamoulian mentions that "we were responsible for his misfortune." This statement is never explained. She found one of the bandits to be quite handsome and brave and told him so, pleading with him to release her mother and friend. The bandits demanded twenty-thousand roubles to release Madame Kalantarian and five-thousand for Abovyan. Virginia Mamoulian tried to explain to them that the family had almost no cash, that all of their assets were tied up in real estate. After the bandits departed with their two hostages, the remaining party went to the police, but decided against involving them for fear the bandits would kill the hostages if the police were to pursue them. The ransoms were paid and the hostages were freed. The incident bears some resemblance to Mamoulian's 1936 film The Gay Desperado, and may have either provided some basis for the work or his attraction to the script when selecting which property to film.

Back in Tiflis, Mrs. Mamoulian resumed her theatre activities. She continued acting and became more involved in management. She claims to have had several offers from area theatres to serve as administrator. Her strongest ties were with a new group she had helped form upon her return from Paris, The People's House. She mentions performing in all the public and private theatres in

Tiflis, listing in particular the Augalsky, Aulabarsky, and Murashko. Despite her apparent success, her activities still elicited strong disapproval from both relatives and acquaintances.

It was during these years, after the return from Paris, that Virginia Mamoulia, in her theatre involvement, slowly succumbed to a very deep, but as she insists, platonic affair with one of the theatre managers, Mikhail Jabar. She says a great deal about the many offers from men and their infatuations with her (although she concedes to not having been particularly beautiful), but how, because of her social position and aloofness from men in general, she never responded to those flirtations, pleased as she was to have received them. But Jabar was different. He very much wanted to marry her. And she very seriously considered it. Zachary was busy with his extramarital affairs, and she says it was finally her devotion to her children that persuaded her not to end her marriage to Mamoulia. Jabar died of blood poisoning from a transfusion about a year after she had turned down his proposal and although she says she did the right thing, "Sometimes I am mad at myself and say, 'Fool you are, life offered you so much, you did not use it! You will leave this world stupid.' I often remember a proverb that writer Shirvan Zadeh told me: 'Worms will eat you anyway regardless of who you will save yourself for.'"

Of her disposition towards men in general she states: "I was very stern towards men. I was proud and aloof. . . . I could love and love could be platonic. I loved to dream and love like in fairy tales, to suffer from afar and never think about trivial life." She enjoyed playing the role of the confidante to men, but would never open up to them herself.

When the first World War broke out, Zachary Mamoulian was recalled to active duty in the Czar's army. Virginia Mamoulian, always playing the hostess, took it upon herself to purchase cigarettes, crosses, and warm clothing for the departing troops. In order to come up with some of the needed cash for these items she recalls emptying her children's piggy-banks. Rouben was then sixteen, Svetlana fourteen. Mrs. Mamoulian received many letters of thanks from the soldiers. She felt deeply for their circumstances. She was especially distressed at the harsh treatment they would receive from their commanding officers. These officers were mainly ethnic Russians while the soldiers from the Caucasus region were non-Russian, comprising the various nationalities of the region, including Armenian. She recalled the oppression by these officers of these minorities throughout her lifetime and developed a deep hatred for them. She remarked, "Wasn't it they who had sown the seeds of hatred between people of different nationalities, pitting one group against the other? Wasn't it they who closed

down Armenian schools? who were oppressing and pushing out Armenians and other ethnic groups? 'Nation of officers'--they caused the revolution which made many people happy."

Zachary Mamouljian was away at war when the Mensheviks captured Tiflis. Here is another point where Rouben Mamouljian's account of his whereabouts differs from his mother's recollection. In certain versions of the story he claims to have been in London visiting when the Revolution came. As we will see, Svetlana Mamouljian did not even go to London until after the war, after the Revolution. Virginia Mamouljian says she and her children fled Tiflis when the Mensheviks arrived and went north to a Bolshevik-controlled region in the North Caucasus, to Kislovodsk. With this flight she and her children found themselves on the move from one place to another until the British occupied Tiflis at the end of the World War. She relates many stories about the people she met along the way, some comic, some tragic. She talks about the constant spot-searches at gunpoint as towns went from White Russian to Soviet and back again. She refers to her ongoing activity presenting plays wherever she went, accompanied by many of her co-actors. From Kislovodsk they travelled to Pyatigorsk, and from there to Stavropol where Svetlana contracted typhus. Here, the civil war was in full force. Mrs. Mamouljian describes the bullets flying right into the yard of the house where they slept

on the floor. Other times they slept in churches; one in particular was destroyed by a bomb the day they left. On the roads they were held up by thieves. From Pyatigorsk and Stavropol, they fled to Batumi and then returned to Tiflis under British occupation. It is unclear whether Zachary was with his wife and children during these times. No mention is made of him. He did return from the war a decorated hero.

As happens during wartime, local girls find themselves being courted by occupying troops. A spate of impulse marriages follow, many of which do not last beyond the occupation. Much to the horror of the Mamoulians, Svetlana fell in love and married one of these soldiers. The family originally thought he was an engineer, but later learned that he was a mechanic. Svetlana and her new husband left Tiflis to live in London.

Once the British departed, Tiflis was again under the control of Menshevik forces. Seeing little future for Rouben in Tiflis where political change now seemed constant, Mr. and Mrs. Mamoulian decided to pack their son off to stay with his sister. Soon after his departure, the Bolsheviks took control of the city. Virginia Mamoulian resumed her career in the theatre and did well under the new regime. She had already played a significant role in the People's Theatre for many years. She also had devoted much of her life to charitable

activities for the poor. Now divested of almost all of their real estate holdings and having no other assets she was not viewed as belonging to the old bourgeois order. Being a member of an oppressed ethnic minority was also a help, at this time. She became involved in the early Soviet Georgian film industry and appeared in three films. She says she had a bright future in this new industry, but after a six-year separation from their daughter, it was Zachary who went to London to visit Svetlana in London. (Rouben was in America by this time.) Virginia was summoned to London at once and instructed to sell their house and remaining possessions before making the journey. She did so, with great foreboding. Her route took her north through Moscow and Leningrad from which she sailed, arriving in London probably in 1924 or 1925. What she found was that her daughter, who by now had a daughter of her own, had been living in poverty, almost to the point of starvation. Svetlana had contracted tuberculosis and had died. By the time Virginia Mamoulian arrived, her daughter had already been dead for several weeks. With nothing to keep them in London, Mr. and Mrs. Mamoulian decided to go to their beloved Paris where they stayed for the next three years. Subsequently, their son, by then a Broadway success, brought them to New York, with the help of the letter from President Roosevelt.

After the death of Svetlana, Rouben Mamoulian's relationship with his parents took on a new, custodial

character. Having left the Soviet Union, the elder Mamoulians were somewhat adrift. Rouben assumed the role of consoler to his grief-stricken mother. She writes of the letters she received from him urging her not to fall apart at this tragedy. He visited his parents in Paris during his summer break from Rochester, and by 1928 had brought them to New York where they stayed temporarily. They returned to Paris where there was a large Russian expatriate community. There, Virginia once again resumed her theatre activities and recalls especially a production of Sumbatov's Betrayal that she says was a big hit.

Once settled in Hollywood in 1931, Mamoulian brought his parents back to this country and the three of them lived together in the same house until Rouben Mamoulian's marriage at the age of forty-seven in 1945. While in Hollywood Mr. and Mrs. Mamoulian would spend their days visiting on the set of the films their son was directing. At night their famous son would include them when he attended parties and receptions. It is unclear what Zachary did throughout the decades in Hollywood. He seems to have been somehow involved in real estate and advised his son to purchase the land on which Mamoulian built his home on Schuyler Road in Beverly Hills. Virginia Mamoulian became involved in the Los Angeles Armenian community, based in the Glendale section of the county. Predictably, she busied herself organizing charitable

functions for the Armenian church and community, often taking the form of amateur benefit theatre performances. Her son was never involved in these activities. Following the death of Svetlana, Mrs. Mamoulian says her life centered around her son. "I live for him." she writes, "he is my God, my joy and meaning in life."

Rouben Mamoulian initially arrived in the United States in 1923, and if his mother's account is to be credited, it appears that the war years and the Revolution did, in fact, touch his life. It seems curious that he chose to conceal his experiences of this tumult. One can only speculate as to the reasons for this gap. Not only was Mamoulian unrevealing about his personal life in general, but was especially secretive of any personal sufferings. He never spoke or wrote about Svetlana's death. He was careful to only present those aspects of his life that he felt would either contribute something positive and uplifting to people, or lead somehow to increased appreciation of his accomplishments. Personal sufferings were not part of the public mask he chose to wear. Instead, his personal sufferings found expression vicariously through art. The next chapter discusses how Mamoulian's grief over Svetlana's death would find its profound expression in his work.

Another reason for the gaps in his autobiographical accounts may also be that he was afraid of the erroneous conclusions people might reach, knowing about his

experiences during the revolution and civil war and about his mother's life and career. Later we will see how this most unpolitical of men was swept up into the politically charged world of Hollywood trade unions and the "witch-hunt" of the McCarthy era.

Armenians, like many oppressed minorities in Russia at the time of the Revolution welcomed the overthrow of the repressive Czarist authority. During its early years no one knew what the new order would bring. Many looked to the changes with the hope that things would change for the better. Mrs. Mamoulian spoke of the new opportunities for creative activity in these early Soviet years.

For Rouben Mamoulian, emigrating to England and then to the United States, meant the chance to fulfill youthful ambitions. He adopted his new environment with great enthusiasm. As a young man with most of his life ahead of him, his reluctance to speak about the years in Russia may have been an outgrowth of behavior typical amongst young immigrants attempting to assimilate into a new environment. He adopted his new cultural identity wholeheartedly. Nevertheless he remained proud of his roots. None of his critical comments about American society or the many changes that took place over his long life led him to speak nostalgically or sentimentally about "the good old days." He lived in the present; not necessarily with a keen awareness of the social realities of the present and all their dimension, but in the

present moment of his own existence and what he considered to be of value. Although his work often dealt with subject matter containing painful social issues, a kind of denial of social reality pervaded. His unwillingness to confront these difficult issues may be a significant weakness in the work. From the moment of Mamoulian's New York theatre debut with Porgy, critics wrote of their amazement that someone newly arrived from such a different culture could have such a feeling for local subject matter. Mamoulian himself was particularly drawn to American subjects, as were many immigrant artists who had great success on Broadway and in Hollywood. But unlike men like Billy Wilder and Douglas Sirk who used their outside perspectives to get to the heart of the American experience, as only an outsider could, Mamoulian's America was a stylized fable; the mythical version of the American experience; Americana.

Sometimes his subject matter lent itself to such treatment; other times it did not, and he was condemned for diluting material that demanded a hard, probing look. In a 1958 oral history transcript, Mamoulian admitted to an awareness that there is a down side to his life in Hollywood, that Hollywood is isolationist. He says it is hard to keep your eyes and ears open to the world when you're in the garden of Eden.²⁹ It may also be that when you are so preoccupied with having the world pay attention to you especially to the degree that one must

in order to achieve success in this society, you become oblivious to much of what goes on around you.

For whatever reasons, Mamoulian felt the details of his early life were unimportant or inappropriate for others to know. As for the rather gross inconsistency between how he describes his mother's involvement with theatre and her own description, I can only speculate that he may have considered this to be private. Or, he just may have been unaware of it if, as she says, she had to keep much of it from the family. She may, indeed, have exaggerated her own accomplishments for reasons of competitiveness or inadequacy. Her references, however, are rather too specific to lead one to believe them to be total fabrications. What she does seem to indulge in, as does he, is a kind of grandiose vision of her accomplishments that often results in gaps or distortions of details that are not insignificant.

When Mamoulian got his big break in London directing The Beating at the Door it seemed both appropriate and ironic that he should be called upon to realize the exigencies of the Bolshevik Revolution on stage, in a place he had gone to get away from the tumult. He often repeated how he resented Americans always assuming that someone who left the Soviet Union must have been fleeing from it. On the contrary, he said, he was in London simply because his sister lived there and his parents thought he should visit her.

The Beating at the Door opened at the St. James Theatre on Monday November 6, 1922, when Mamoulian was twenty-five years old, not twenty-one or twenty-two as he suggested. The plot, as told in The Sunday Times, ran as follows:

we are told of Kerensky's downfall. A family of Russian nobles is seized by a crew of infuriated revolutionaries, stripped of all their great possessions and their luxuries, and made to work as slaves in their own forests. They plot for the return of the old regime. One of their friends, a Socialist Prince, has joined the Communist ranks. He is in love with the daughter of the family, and despises her fiancée, a comparatively worthless exquisite. The conspiracy is discovered, and all the family are arrested, including the fiancée. Through the agency of the Bolshevik Prince they all escape. He, disgusted with the atrocities he has seen, sets out, accompanied by the Princess, for another land, where they can jointly work for a regenerated Russia.³⁰

Mamoulian may have insisted that he was unpolitical, but the content of this play was intended to shock audiences. The reviewers wasted no time noticing how the ladies in the audience clutched their jewels during the play, fearing that Bolsheviks might do the same to them.

Curiously, the reviews make no mention of Mamoulian or the stage direction of the production. They are universally negative, focussing on the weaknesses of the script and the surprisingly bad performances by otherwise highly respected actors. From reading the reviews it is difficult to imagine how this play could have catapulted Mamoulian to recognition by Hébertot and Eastman. In the newspaper advertisements and other publicity, Mamoulian gets no billing at all. The show closed after a two-week

run. The reviews do indicate, however, that the play was interspersed with musical interludes by The Grigory Macaroff Singers. The musical portions of the evening were greatly enjoyed, in contrast to the play itself. The presence of Austin Page and Alexander Nethersole at rehearsals of Macaroff's company is not some unexplained accident of fate, as Mamoulian related it, but quite logical considering the company was being engaged as an integral part of this production. That the young director engaged to work with these singers would also be asked to work with the play's director in order to insure Russian authenticity follows without any great mystery. As for leaving the production after the initial three days of rehearsal, it would not be the first time that Mamoulian claimed to have quit a production when, in fact, he had been asked to leave. The circumstances of his resuming full directorial responsibility may have been as he says or there may have been other circumstances of which even he was unaware.

If the play did not enjoy critical or box office success and Mamoulian himself was, as he stated, unhappy with both the script and his direction in the naturalistic style of the Moscow Art Theatre, the offer from Hébertot and Eastman seems all the more perplexing. For that matter, his training at the Moscow Art Theatre was only ever mentioned in passing and remains a vague reference. No dates were given and, as already stated,

the duration of study at university varied from version to version.

The Moscow Art Theatre under Evgeny Vakhtangov merits closer examination. Interestingly, Mamoulian bears a striking resemblance to Vakhtangov in many ways. Mel Gordon, in The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia, writes:

Born in 1883 into the family of a wealthy Armenian tobacco merchant. . . . From the earliest age he found himself driven into the fantasy worlds of dance, music, and theatre. Make-believe became his total universe. . . . Vakhtangov lived, thought, and dreamed only theatre. . . . Every production detail, from lighting design to intensive biographical studies of the playwrights, was rigorously researched by Vakhtangov. No aspect of theatre escaped his attention or was too trivial for study. . . . In 1904, Vakhtangov entered Moscow University's Department of Jurisprudence, ostensibly to pursue a career in law. . . . one year shy of his law degree and after acting and directing in a dozen or so performances, Vakhtangov made his final break with the university and his family's wishes.³¹

In 1914 Vakhtangov began an amateur group outside the Moscow Art Theatre called The Drama Studio. It was comprised of students he had recruited from the university. In this and other experimental studios Vakhtangov formed, he drifted away from the naturalism of Stanislavsky and headed toward the approach that would bring him his greatest fame in years to come--stylization. It seems quite likely that this venue, not the Art Theatre itself, is where Mamoulian studied under Vakhtangov. His studies probably ended because Vakhtangov typically organized such amateur workshops for short periods of time. The demands on his creative energies by

major productions left little time for sustaining sideline projects which, having served their immediate purpose would be concluded in order for him to move on to newer projects.

In December 1915, Vakhtangov staged a successful production of a play by Henning Berger called The Deluge, about workers and some unsavory businessmen who patronize a saloon in Colorado at the turn-of-the-century. The play presents a troubled view of human nature, where people's better instincts emerge when disaster strikes, but, once the danger is over, they revert back to their selfish ways. It points to the need for men to act like brothers at all times; the need for love and caring between people. It is highly likely, given the timing of the production, that Mamoulian saw the play. Notice what was particularly innovative about Vakhtangov's work in this production:

In The Deluge, Vakhtangov developed rhythm and tempo for each of the characters' behavior. For instance, to establish a frenzied American tempo, Vakhtangov had a minor character do the following in the background: rush into the saloon; order and gulp down in rapid succession soup, a whole chicken, and dessert; pay the bill and leave, all in one swift action. While maintaining a pronounced rhythmic sense and mood, Vakhtangov helped create in his actors a sharply felt individuality and humanity for each of the play's characters. Even the most evil or grotesque among the characters revealed a gentle or loving core. The Tolstoyan message, a belief that men are wolves who can be purified through love or the approach of death, was never better presented.³²

Nothing could be more "Mamoulianian" in technique or approach or philosophy. Keep in mind also that even in

pure Stanislavsky technique rhythm is a significant concept as exemplified in the notion of breaking down a script into beats. In interviews Mamoulian would consistently deny having been influenced by any movement or individual's work. He contended that any similarity of his work to that of others was purely coincidental. He rarely spoke about stage productions or films by other directors. Friends and co-workers whom I interviewed were unable to recall him ever discussing the work other directors, yet all seemed certain that he saw a great deal of theatre and film other than his own. In seminars during later years he would refer in critical terms to recent trends in film. This suggests he had been keeping up with representative bodies of work.

In light of the influence Vakhtangov probably had in Mamoulian's artistic development, Mamoulian's stated dissatisfaction with his first major directing effort may more accurately be ascribed to the distinction between manner and style than one between naturalism and stylization, as he claimed. At this early stage Mamoulian's work may have still been the replication of techniques and concepts he had amassed from a lifelong exposure to theatre through his mother and his study under Vakhtangov. It had yet to become him and he it. His work in this production was, even by his own admission, imitative and, therefore, mannered rather than truly stylized. The style had yet to be developed and refined.

This would happen in the laboratory years at Rochester. An awakening to the distinction between manner and style came for Mamoulian at this time in London. He viewed a lifetime retrospective of the paintings of Paul Gauguin in which he witnessed an artistic emergence and drew parallels to his own life. Like the genius Gauguin who rejected realism, so, too, would Mamoulian develop his own style, "stylization."

If Vakhtangov's approach and world-view was kindred to Mamoulian's, it was the family drama among himself and his mother, his father, and his sister that would be played out time and again in both his stage and film work. The scripts that he selected to work on may at first glance seem to be so diverse as to have no common denominator, but they all contain strong elements of the Mamoulian family dynamic. These stories share a number of features. They usually concern a young dreamer of unusual capabilities who has difficulty or little experience in forming intimate, adult relationships, especially with a peer. Instead, what resonates for the young hero(ine) is an older lover who is somewhat unapproachable, who lives a double life, someone who is often in show business. Complicating things is usually an older man, an authority figure, who presents a threat and must be conquered. This is usually accomplished, at the expense of the older lover who ends up being sacrificed after having nurtured the young hero(ine) to full adult potential for love and

creativity. Sometimes, the conflict ends in tragedy for all, a sort of Don Quixote meets Camille. Without intending this to be reductive and a terribly worn-out kind of analysis to apply in exegesis, one cannot help but notice the Oedipal conflict in masked form reappearing throughout these works and in his conflicts with co-workers and management. No matter how divergent in genre Mamoulian's works are, virtually all contain the Mamoulian family relationships beneath the mask of stylization.

Finally, if the offer from Hébertot still seems perplexing, the offer from Eastman is less so. Mamoulian's colleagues at Rochester, Paul Horgan, Nicolas Slonimsky, and Otto Luening, discuss in their published reminiscences of the Rochester years reveal what Mamoulian never did--what brought him to Rochester other than a mysterious telegram and the fond memory of Buffalo Bill. Living in the Russian emigré community of London in the early 1920's was a former leading tenor of the Petersburg Opera named Vladimir Rosing. Rosing, like almost everything Russian in London at this time, was all the rage. After many concerts in England and tours through Europe, Rosing was contracted to bring his talents to the outpost of the British commonwealth--Canada. En route, crossing the Atlantic, Rosing met a fellow passenger, George Eastman. On board he convinced Eastman to support an opera company at the newly founded

Eastman School of Music. Thus, The American Opera Company was born. Rosing was given the task of staffing this new company. Exactly how Rosing knew Mamoulian is unclear, but not hard to imagine. The world of Russian emigré artists in London must have been a relatively small one. Through Rosing, Eastman made an offer to Mamoulian. Mamoulian's work in The Beating at the Door may have had little bearing on the offer from Eastman other than that it showed that Mamoulian had proven himself by having a major West End production to his credit.

Another point Mamoulian failed to mention was the enormous salary attached to the offer. Slonimsky, who had a coveted position working with Koussevitzsky in Paris found the money offered him to be rehearsal pianist and coach in Rochester, three-thousand dollars a year, ". . . a sum that only existed in fiction for me."³³; impossible to turn down. Horgan indicated that Mamoulian's salary as principal director would have been several times that of Slonimsky. Mamoulian was someone who had been raised in the genteel world of summer villas and servants, only to see it taken away. He found himself in the unlikely situation of having to support himself, a task at which, he conceded, he was a total failure. Directing was his salvation. Years later, he would tell young directors not to sacrifice their art for commercial concerns, and that he had never done so and never would. However, money, and the quality of life to live in the "style" he wanted was

very important to him. The money had to have been a major consideration, as it would have been for anyone.

Mamoulian gave this chapter in his life a storybook closing. He said that after accepting Eastman's offer, he sailed two weeks later, on the S.S. Homeric from Southampton to New York. Who should be on the ship but the "Buffalo Bill" he had been dreaming of. What he did not expect was that this American cowboy attracted large crowds with jokes. The cowboy's name was Will Rogers.

Chapter 2: EXPERIMENTATION WITH OPERA

By 1923, George Eastman (1854-1932) and his Kodak company were longtime international household names. Eastman, inventor-industrialist-philanthropist, at age seventy, was a formidable figure. The bachelor-tycoon, in his later years, was committed to a legacy for the community of Rochester. He created endowments to build institutions of health, education, and the arts--especially music.

Musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky had this to say about

Eastman:

George Eastman was a perfect prototype of an American philanthropist, as American millionaires are portrayed in European fiction. He gave generously to causes, even those which he could not quite appreciate. Musicians were among the beneficiaries of his bounties. He admittedly had no knowledge of music Eastman liked to have music played while he had breakfast. I often played for him with a violinist, a cellist, or both in a piano trio. Eastman preferred quiet, classical or romantic music. For these breakfasts, musicians were placed on the balcony of a large hall in Eastman's house in Rochester. He could see us, but we could not see him, which insured his privacy. His breakfast took precisely thirty-five minutes, and he paid \$35 per performance to each of us, an amazing largesse for the time.¹

Slonimsky expressed his delight at having been summoned to appear before the world-famous inventor of the Kodak camera and remarked, "America was indeed a fairy-tale land."² It must also have been a thrill for Mamoulian to be summoned by one of the great men of history. It was not his

first contact with greatness though, nor would it be his last. As a boy, he allegedly played the violin for Czar Nicolas II who was traveling through Tiflis. When he was a youth, his mother frequently hosted social gatherings of famous Armenian writers and artists. As a student he met the great Stanislavsky and studied under Vakhtangov. His encounters with Macaroff, Rosing, Austin Page, Alexander Nethersole, and the cast of The Beating at the Door, plus the encounter with Jacques Hébertot would be viewed as tests of his ability to stand up to the great and powerful, win their respect and have them surrender themselves to his will. The triumph of each power struggle is the most notable theme in Mamoulian's discussion of his career and a feature he never tired of recalling.

The challenge Eastman offered Mamoulian was of a caliber beyond any previous sponsor-adversary. To succeed with figures of world-historical significance was to succeed in a world of institutionalized power. Success for Mamoulian was real only if recognized by the world. Living his life in obscurity, unencumbered by the hurly-burly, with no purpose other than pursuing his artistic goals, would never have appealed to Mamoulian. Consequently he spent his life seeking access to those who conferred success on an individual, whether Broadway producers, Hollywood moguls, or George Eastman. Hébertot was no match for Eastman in this league.

Mamouljian claimed that pursuit of his artistic vision superseded all other considerations. But the way he lived proves otherwise. For in the end, he chose not working, over working without public acclaim.

The end of the World War I marked another advance in the international power of the U.S. The Old World was crumbling, and the blow dealt by the war to Europe soon found expression in art. Mamouljian, however, was not seeking to question the social order. Had he wanted to confront political realities in his art, he could have stayed in Russia. But in America, art was divorced from such a political function. It was more controlled by financial considerations than it was elsewhere.

Mamouljian was not interested in pursuing art for political or social purposes. For him, its primary purpose was to entertain, and at best, to demonstrate how those handicapped by social and economic position could transcend degradation through the power of love. Mamouljian's epicurean philosophy sorted well with the Zeitgeist of America in the twenties and its nearly national religion of "minding one's own business." Mamouljian sought an environment where art would not be dragged into the mud of politics. "Art for life's sake" implied that beauty would provide an antidote to society's miseries. Troublesome social realities could provide material for dramatic action, but the social order was never questioned. The individual could transcend his or her environment through self-assertion, through genius, and

through love. In this way, Mamouliau's aesthetic adheres to that of nineteenth-century Romanticism. The cult of the genius, of individualism, also fits in well with the American spirit and with the philosophy of men like Eastman.

Men like Eastman were responsible for the new expansionism of America, and, like a Prince Esterhazy, this prince of industrialism was among the elite in the society with the means to control the manufacture of culture, which he held to the same standards of profitability as any other product. After an initial period of patronage, an artistic endeavor he supported which could not sustain itself was deemed of insufficient interest to the market and did not warrant continued support.

Eastman was a self-made millionaire, a technical innovator, and genius--a man to whom Mamouliau could relate. Mamouliau gravitated toward such men for patronage. Being selected by them was confirmation of his own worth. He found himself repeatedly in the confusing position of needing their acceptance as a means of self-validation, while engaging in a struggle to affirm his own power lest it be superseded by theirs.

The Eastman School of the University of Rochester had been operating since 1921, when Eastman, acting on a suggestion by Vladimir Rosing, agreed to endow it with an opera department and opera company, along with a gift of a quarter of a million dollars. The opera company was called the Rochester American Opera Company, sometimes simply

referred to as the American Opera Company. Eastman, in his artistic endeavors, intended to be the innovator he was in industry. He wanted recognition as the sponsor of the vanguard of the artistic world. He had wealth, power, and fame, but, as a businessman of humble origins, cultural patronage could endow him with the status of vitrtual aristocracy. His Rochester empire was a distant outpost in a world where being part of the international elite usually meant chosing to live in London, Paris, or New York. He would show the world that his power could command the cultural elite to come to him. Mamoulian could lend Eastman the kind of distinction he was cultivating. An account of Mamoulian at the time of his arrival in Rochester describes him as having

. . . a distinctly European look, underlined by the beautiful London suits he wore. He was tall, slender, black-haired. His face was pale, and his finely shaped head was always held high. What otherwise might have seemed a bearing of cold, remote superiority was saved by the sympathetic warmth of his smile, when he gave it; when, in effect, his smile was earned by the person he was with. He wore, at first, pince-nez, which seemed a badge of culture, a symptom of intellectual maturity for a very young man in a very authoritative position. . . . He wore black fedora hats. His long black overcoat was lined with fur, which turned over to make a great collar. He carried fresh gloves always, and a gold-headed black stick He wore spats In the lapel of his lounge coat he habitually wore two or three dried and faded violets ³

Mamoulian was twenty-six years old at the time. The cultural seal of approval that he cultivated through his appearance projected the kind of image that would win him favor in his many future encounters in this country with men like Eastman who had succeeded in acquiring everything they wanted except

social position and respect. Over the years the presentation would change, but not the effect.

Mamouljian was to share directorship of the Eastman School's opera training program with Rosing, as well as that of the Rochester American Opera Company. Rosing was more involved in administrative aspects of operating the program: recruiting students, planning tours. Such an arrangement was fortuitous for Mamouljian who preferred to attend to the dramatic training of the singers for performance and the mounting of stage productions. His experience in London already made clear his distaste for sharing leadership.

Prior to the offer from Eastman, Mamouljian had never worked in opera. Apart from childhood exposure to it and years of musical study of the violin, nothing before had prepared him for his task in Rochester. After deciding to accept the position, while still in London, he immersed himself in library study to become familiar with the operatic repertory, history, and theory. He came to opera with the advantage of being free of exposure to many regressive conventions that had and still have to a large degree a control over operatic production. Mamouljian's background appealed to Eastman who wanted innovation, who wanted to see the dramatic values on the operatic stage raised, and who wanted opera sung in English. From Europe, Mamouljian brought the techniques of the Moscow Art Theatre, stressing psychological truth and expressive movement. While Mamouljian was not the first student of the Moscow Art

Theatre to come to this country, Stanislavsky technique was as yet untried in opera in America. He stressed the importance of concentration and helped singers to draw upon endowment and sense memory techniques in order to bring greater depth and dramatic truth to their work. In later years, William Holden and Charlton Heston, among others who had their first starring roles in film and theatre under Mamouljian's direction, credited him with teaching them the discipline of the actor's work.

In Rochester, Mamouljian perfected what would be the most noteworthy features of his work in musicals both on stage and in film: namely, devising striking pictorial compositions of chorus and other large groups of people, while also creating fully developed individual characters for each performer of the group.

Like his teacher Vakhtangov, Mamouljian would do vast amounts of research in preparing to direct. He would read archeology, study painting, music, and anything else that would accustom him to the world of the work he was attempting to realize on stage. From these preparatory studies, which he often likened to those of Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo, he would plan every aspect of a production from staging to lighting to sound.

He departed from the organic approach of the Moscow Art Theatre in this respect: "I believe in overall design. It's quite fashionable, I hear it so frequently, the fellow says, 'Oh, I go on the set and I improvise.' That's ridiculous.

Improvisation is for the birds and for the amateurs. You don't improvise a statue or a painting."⁴

Pulitzer prize-winning novelist Paul Horgan was a student and scenic designer in Rochester at the time Mamoulian was there and worked closely with him. Horgan's accounts of his experiences with Mamoulian are the most detailed of any available of the man and his work during the Rochester years:

The gravity and restraint of his casual contacts with us, the sense of exquisite manner and formality, vanished; and in the drama classes, he became a column of energy His power of concentration was extraordinary. He was so possessed by the ideas and the atmosphere of the dramatic exercise he was working on that the whole company . . . felt separately and powerfully the impact of his intellect and his disciplined emotion. . . . You felt that he had a crystal-clear image of what a given character was like, what whole-life background created it for the author, what ripples of dramatic meaning it would have in its spreading touch with other lives, and what common human experiences in all of us it could refer to, so arousing in us its primary meaning.

He was even then a profound student of psychology Discussion of ideas, references to the other arts--painting, sculpture, literature, philosophy--in order to shed light from all possible quarters upon the musical and theatrical problem at hand. Wonderfully clear, immediate sketches or pantomimes of character, in which he would become a personality ⁵

Horgan goes on to describe a fifteen-minute pantomime of a barber that Mamoulian demonstrated for his class, astounding the group with its nuance, concentration, and imaginative illusion. With this demonstration, he explained the importance of concentration. He also explained how difficult it was for the actor to make even the simplest action, like crossing a room, convincing. Such demonstrations are, of course, pure Stanislavsky; something

which was still exotic and revolutionary in this country at the time. Horgan continues:

Aside from his intimate personal qualities, what gave him real authority as a creative director was the richness of his own culture. He knew more about the various contributing elements of a stage production than any of the artists separately charged with creating each. His knowledge and taste in music were superior, though he was not a performer. . . . He was widely read in dramatic and operatic literature, as well as in other kinds; and on many a day could tell American students things about their own national literature that they were uneasily short on. He was an amusing draughtsman, and liked to draw . . . on restaurant tables, menus, paper napkins; but beyond this, his love of the art of painting was nourished by a penetrating knowledge of the great visual art of the European past; and the authority of such taste made him immediately articulate in plans and criticisms of stage decors. We felt that he was closer to anyone we ever heard of to embodying Gordon Craig's ideal for the regisseur--that he should know more about the writing of plays than the playwright, more of music than the composer, more of painting than the painter, more of acting than the actor.⁶

Between themselves, Mamoulian, Horgan, and Slonimsky founded what they called the Society of Unrecognized Geniuses. Slonimsky was President, Mamoulian Vice-President, and Horgan Treasurer. Horgan described social gatherings at Mamoulian's elegantly furnished house where:

He would sometimes decree a winter literary evening, and invite me to join him. While the clock ticked distantly on the landing of the elegant 1910 stairway of the mansion, we would, in silence, but exchanging occasional looks of encouragement, confirmation, and progress, proceed with our separate compositions. Mine were likely to be sonnets, none of which survives. His, lyrical prose sketches of characters, or aphorisms of the theatre art, or philosophical tales in the style of Villiers de L'Isle-Adam or E. T. A. Hoffman.⁷

Finally, Horgan characterized an aspect of Mamoulian's sensibilities that would bear on his relations with

associates throughout his career, earning him a reputation for being difficult:

I don't think I ever heard him give an equivocal judgment, even for the sake of tact and good manners, when the critical values of art were involved. Rochester now and then bridled at such honesty. It was natural for so important--and so recent--a provincial capital of the arts to consider its orchestra, its concerts, its taste, as unimpeachable. He could have had an easier and earlier popularity if he had permitted himself a trifle flattery now and then. But he never did. Consequently he was viewed as formidable, here and there. One of the great catchwords was 'cooperation.' Perhaps he did not wholly 'cooperate' with the local amour propre. Perhaps Mist' Eastman himself might at moments have preferred a little more courtier-like enthusiasm. But as always when people come up against firm character, they could not help but admire it.⁸

Grandma Kate taught him to think so and act accordingly, but this approach did not always serve him well.

By 1923, a large portion of Eastman's income was derived from the manufacture and sale of motion-picture film stock. Kodak held a virtual monopoly on film stock in this country, and he had reason to promote his investment. Dramatic, dance, orchestral, and operatic excerpts were performed as inserts on the Eastman Theatre bills where motion-pictures were the main attraction. Live performance merely filled out the program to lure the public into the theatre. Such was the practice in movie houses at the time. Motion-picture impresarios competed for the most lavish stage spectacles to accompany film attractions. This competition led to the building of elaborate movie palaces. Film appealed more to the common man than any communication medium that had preceded it. But its status was contemptible

in the eyes of the cultured elite. Long after D.W. Griffith demonstrated the artistry of film, it suffered from a less than respectable reputation.

In spite of this, film was already an extraordinarily powerful medium by the 1920s, and the men who controlled the industry felt the need to dress up this art of the masses and legitimize it by attracting the finest performers of the stage and concert hall to perform in its temples. Some of the greatest artists of the twentieth century began their careers in this country on the stages of movie theatres. A man of Mamoulian's cultural refinement and European origins could endow this plebian business with patrician respectability.

Eastman determined that the Rochester Opera Company would serve just this function and begin by presenting one-act operatic excerpts as an accompaniment to feature film presentations. Selections from the best works of the standard operatic repertory would complement the Kodak product to its best advantage and prestige. In addition to these operatic excerpts, Mamoulian was asked to stage other brief entertainments to fill the movie house bills.

Along with these operatic acts, the Eastman Theatre presented other sorts of stage divertimenti in those years, and Mamoulian was the director of these also. They ranged through many styles and subjects, from serious musical moments, to comic ballet, to little stage anthologies of folk song suitably dramatized.⁹

This adjunctive art was undoubtedly not what Mamoulian had had in mind when he came to Rochester. But it provided him

an invaluable period of apprenticeship and freedom to experiment without the high stakes of later years. Mamoulian had to draw upon his students to perform these pieces and, as a result, class time was devoted mainly to preparation for performance. Class work suffered because of this pressure for results at such an early stage of training. Similarly, the presentations suffered from the inadequate training of the performers. To complicate matters further, Mamoulian was expected to utilize multiple casting in order to secure full participation of the student body, a common practice in schools, placing extraordinary demands on the teacher-director.

William Joseph Becvar, in his 1975 doctoral dissertation, "The Stage and Film Career of Rouben Mamoulian,"¹⁰ provides a lengthy account of the individual pieces staged by Mamoulian during his three-year stay in Rochester, plus a sampling of the critical response to his work from local newspapers at the time. The premiere work was the third act of Verdi's Rigoletto for a one-week run, commencing November 26, 1923. It played three performances each day alongside the movie bill. Programs were printed for these bills, and reviewers whose comments would appear in the daily newspapers sometimes attended. Comments were favorable for Rigoletto, citing the surprising acting realization in the piece.

The second production was the fourth act of Gounod's Faust, which opened on December 17, 1923, and included a

cast, chorus, and corps de ballet of seventy people. It, too, was praised in the press. In this production, Mamoulian made use of shadows for visual and emotional effect on stage for the first time. He would use this device of moving shadows of figures against a set wall to create an eerie, almost grotesque, effect in almost every stage and film piece he directed from this time onward. It became a signature of his style. It is interesting to note that, for his two premiere presentations, Mamoulian chose the most climactic moments in bravura grand-operas to show off to maximum effect what he could do. Most directors, especially Stanislavsky-trained directors, would shy away from such a result-oriented choice.

On January 20, 1924, Mamoulian presented The Volga Boatman's Song as a post-screening entertainment. It, too, was favorably received.¹¹ In 1924, Mamoulian directed portions of Rossini's The Barber of Seville, Wagner's Tannhäuser, Gounod's Romeo and Juliet, Tchaikovsky's The Queen of Spades, Cadman's Shanewis, Sullivan's H. M. S. Pinafore, Moussorgsky's Boris Godunov, and Leoncavallo's Pagliacci. These varied in length from one duet to an entire act.

Here Mamoulian demonstrated his determination to display versatility by staging an eclectic assortment of operatic subject matter and styles. Most fall within the confines of nineteenth-century romanticism and deal with subject matter very much in keeping with the themes of

primary interest to Mamoulian: the dual nature of man as manifested in the conflict between the animalistic--the sexual and brutal--impulses within the individual, and the spiritual--the loving and noble--impulses; the glory and the burden of the individual of great ability who, as Mamoulian often quoted from Shaw's Saint Joan, must listen to his/her voices and follow his genius, though it may conflict with custom, and the catalyzing force of eros, which both tempts the hero to destruction and propels him to a higher state of love, similar to the ideal of platonic love. Cross-generational conflicts over sex and power were very much at issue in each of these works. The hero(ine) may triumph or expire in the process. The opera buffa and operetta selections embodied the same conflicts, but parodied. Here Mamoulian got to demonstrate his visual wit and speed of coordination in handling the peripeteia, quid pro quos, rapid entrances and exits, and complex movement of characters and groups in and out of the performing space.

All these works served as a laboratory for Mamoulian to refine and apply his ideas on integration of the various elements of mise-en-scène into a unified whole through rhythm, stylized movement, visual composition, and decor.

In the summer of 1924, Mamoulian became involved in an effort to start a community theatre company in Rochester, unaffiliated with Eastman and the university. He served as an artistic advisor on matters of script-selection and artistic purpose, but resigned at the end of the summer when

the company decided that it wanted to determine its own policies.

In January of 1925, Mamoulian presented Gounod's Faust in its entirety, to continued critical praise. The Faust legend very much embodies themes of great resonance for Mamoulian, with its protagonist who is a genius, a technical innovator, in search of a means of overcoming man's limitations. He aspires to new spiritual heights, while satisfying his unexpressed base animal instincts. Through patronage of an older male adversary, he is able to fulfill his ambitions. But it is only through a woman's love and her self-sacrifice on his behalf that he transcends his baser instincts. It would be another few years before Mamoulian would realize the most complete synthesis of thematic material and technique in the Faustian Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Following the complete staging of Faust, segments of it were repeated for several weeks, along with the fourth act of La Traviata and again, Rigoletto.

Women of the demi-monde like Camille, Ivy in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Bess in Porgy and Bess, Thi Linh in Congai, Sadie in Sadie Thompson (the musical based on Somerset Maugham's Rain), Becky Sharp, Lila in St. Louis Woman, Kitty Darling in Applause, Nan in City Streets, Lily in Song of Songs, Katusha in We Live Again--the film version of Tolstoy's Resurrection, Lorna in Golden Boy, Dona Sol in Blood and Sand, Susan in Rings on Her Fingers, the saloon

girl in Summer Holiday, and Carmen held a particular fascination for Mamoulian.

The central female character of virtually every Mamoulian project is such a figure. She is usually older than the ambitious young male protagonist in each piece, and awakens in him intense feelings of desire to the point of obsession. The force of these women on the young hero nearly results in his destruction; yet it is through these women that a rite of passage into mature, adult consciousness is achieved--usually at the expense of the woman, who is sacrificed in the process. She serves mainly to carry the hero to his true destiny of greatness. In the end it is often the purer, spiritual love of another female character that leads to a kind of redemption. But it is the awakening of sexuality by these archetypal sirens and vixens that provides the hero with the necessary potency to reach his climax. This climax may take the form of some supreme constructive achievement or act of self-destruction or both.

In each case there is an older, powerful male competitor for the possession of the sexually arousing female, who poses a threat that must be eliminated. Just when the threat appears to have been overcome, a new rival often appears on the scene, and the temptress, true to her nature, must remain a temptress, incapable of stable commitment the hero needs. The realization of this destiny ultimately leads either to the hero's destruction, or to conquest of his obsession and the projection of his new

power into a relationship with a more suitable mate, a peer of the same class.

Class struggle is also a dominant underlying theme in all Mamoulian's projects. The hero is invariably a member of the dominant class, who through sexual contact with one of the women of the demi-monde or lower classes, victims of the class system, undergoes creative invigoration and renewal. Once these women have enticed him with the powers of the base animalistic world, close to nature and to instinct, the hero may return to his rarefied world, having been inoculated with the life force. In the sexual politics, the larger class politics of bourgeois capitalism are played out.

The role of women and members of the underclass extends to artists as well. A European, like Mamoulian, of non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic origin, is brought from his culturally fertile world by a powerful member of the ruling elite into a world of soulless bourgeois existence. He is appropriated for the signs of culture and life force that his art offers. The artist, through his creativity, possesses the power to rejuvenate this world by transforming the conflicts of the system into art. Here, we have a deeper, unstated meaning of "art for life's sake." But it is an art that is a business built on patronage, with the purpose of further institutionalizing existing beliefs and socio-sexual relations, alluding to the underlying barbarism without allowing it to transgress or disrupt the system that feeds

off it. So, while the aristocratic Mamouljian expressed his own experience of cultural appropriation in the character dynamics of the works he chose to realize, he, too, was being appropriated as a member of an underclass of artists to serve the social and cultural needs of his patron, Eastman. Through Mamouljian's efforts, and those like him, Eastman was able to further solidify his status.

The struggle for autonomy between Mamouljian and his patrons would find final expression in the subject matter he chose to dramatize; a struggle that dates back to the power structure of his family. Ultimately, he deluded himself into believing that he had succeeded in achieving an empowered autonomy, whereas the facts proved otherwise, time and again. Mamouljian held onto the naive simplicity of the fairy-tale Grandma Kate told him, thus never facing the more complex relations of the world, let alone dealing with them head on.

Paul Horgan discusses the abominable conditions under which Mamouljian had to work--the inadequate backstage, rehearsal, and poorly-lit scenic construction space. These were a source of consternation to Mamouljian who was overworked, under sweatshop conditions, and expected to create excellent product for Eastman, the patron. In his struggle with authority Mamouljian could not win. He saw it otherwise in recounting the events of his life. Throughout his career he reveled in seeing his name in print and seized every opportunity, onstage and off, to construct a scenario

of his own life depicting himself as the victor in each struggle. He repeatedly provoked showdowns with his patrons or stars. Quarrels over advertisement billing, censorship, and salary were further manifestations of the need to assert his ego over those who truly held the power.

Early in 1925, Mamoulian staged a full-length Carmen; again, to great press acclaim in which expressive movement, and, now, expressive use of color are mentioned. Stylized use of color for maximum psychological impact was an area of innovation in which he would make unique contributions throughout his career. In this early work on Carmen, this component of his life's work received its first exploration.

Later in the spring of 1925, after Mamoulian felt he had more than sufficiently proved himself, he asked Eastman to visit his office. Here he proposed the start of an "Eastman School of Dance and Dramatic Action." He suggested dance training be added to the curriculum, as well as more emphasis on theatrical training than the current structure allowed. The leaden, pretentious name Mamoulian proposed to call the school was an attempt to circumvent rejection of the idea by Eastman who disliked the term "theatre," because it carried with it a connotation opposite to what he was trying to accomplish with his endowments. On many occasions Mamoulian retold the details of the encounter in which he conquered the formidable Eastman:

As usual, Eastman arrived promptly, announcing, 'You have fifteen minutes, Mamoulian' Mamoulian protested. Eastman squinting at the watch he carried in his vest pocket, observed, 'You have thirteen

minutes left.' At this point Mamoulian announced that the situation was impossible and that, since Eastman was going on a six-month safari, it looked as if the whole project was finished before it could get off the ground. Eastman slammed his hand on the table, 'Are you arguing with me, Mamoulian?' To this the showman--entrepreneur Mamoulian responded, 'Yes!' The gamble worked. Eastman gave Mamoulian his time, and the result was the founding of the Eastman School of Dance and Dramatic Action. After Eastman's climb up four flights to Mamoulian's office, the music building also got an elevator.¹²

The guiding principle of the Grandma Kate story is retold yet one more time. Mamoulian may have won battles along the way, but ultimately he lost the war. Yet he never saw it that way.

That summer of 1925, Mamoulian went to New York City to recruit people to work in this new school. He returned with Martha Graham. In her work he saw the kind of dramatic expression in movement that he had envisioned for his own work. Graham could help in fulfilling his vision. But she left after only six months. She was able to see the situation for what it was in a way that Mamoulian never could. For him to do so it would have invalidated the prestige it bestowed upon him. Graham's biographer Don McDonagh states:

Martha Graham had just come from doing 'Greenwich Village Follies' which was 'a bad job' and was rescued by an offer from Eastman School.¹³

Graham herself said:

I learned a great deal from them. I was a little embittered by them. Mamoulian was there at the time, getting a bad deal, a very bad deal, so when they wanted me to come back for a second year, and I walked into that big room--it seems to me it was a tremendous room--to sign my contract for ruining myself at a tremendous amount of money at that time--

and today!--I picked up the pen and started to write, and I put down 'M--' and I said, 'Excuse me, Mr. Hanson [Founding Director of the Eastman School of Music] I cannot do it.' And then I turned and walked out.¹⁴

Graham goes on to say that they wanted her to teach, which she says "was utter nonsense"; that what they really wanted her for was to "do dances." And when she realized that they did not want her to develop dance as an art, but create something like a Radio City revue to accompany film screenings, she decided she had to leave.

Graham went on to great fame, much greater than Mamouljian's, perhaps because her vision was pure, and she would not compromise it. He always claimed the same integrity; that he "listened to his voices." But unwittingly, throughout his career, he allowed his vision to be co-opted by commercial interests. More than that, in practice he embraced the interests of the authorities he portrayed as being so destructive; the tyranny he wanted to conquer. In his ideal of "art for life's sake," he allowed his vision to become formalistic, turning a blind eye to the messages he was unconsciously encoding. Hal Foster, writing about neoexpressionism in the 1980's, which appropriates the symbols of culture into a pastiche, makes a statement which lends itself to application in the case of Mamouljian as well:

There is an idealism, here, to be sure, but it is an idealism shown to be an idolatry, a fascination with a false image that mimics the presumed attributes of authenticity when it is in fact just the hollow mask with which a frustrated, defeated consciousness tries to cover up its own negativity.¹⁵

Sometime during these months, Mamoulian learned of the death of his sister Svetlana in London. Paul Horgan remarked how impressed he was with the dignity and restraint Mamoulian demonstrated upon learning the news and his subsequent response to it. Horgan recalls that Mamoulian quietly left town to come to terms with the loss on his own, and returned three days later, to work, apparently having resolved the loss within himself. He never discussed the matter or betrayed any of its impact. What Horgan viewed as admirable and dignified could be alternately interpreted as a denial of pain, an irreconcilable horror. Again the public mask was restored in order not to betray the inner man. Without his awareness, the inner struggles found their way into his art. Unfortunately, his distancing of himself and inability to externalize emotions took its toll in his art as well, rendering it frequently artificial and, at times, academic and cold.

On January 15, 1926, Mamoulian presented what he and others who saw it considered the finest work of his career. The play was Maurice Maeterlinck's Sister Beatrice, in a new translation by Paul Horgan. In this symbolist play, Mamoulian created the idealized synthesis of expressive movement, music, and scenic art into an organic whole. Otto Luening composed an original score based on fourteenth century Gregorian chant, to accompany the play. The entire production evolved organically as Luening actually composed the score during the rehearsals to create exactly the right

accompaniment and generate the desired rhythmic base upon which the movement would be choreographed by Martha Graham and her assistant Esther Gustafson. Luening described this production as revolutionary, unlike anything ever seen at that time, and likened it to the kind of multi-media theatre that emerged in the 1960s.¹⁶

The story of Sister Beatrice concerns a young novice in a convent who has secretly fallen in love with a military officer. Her passion overpowers her, and she deserts the convent in the middle of the night to run away with her lover. Before the other nuns are able to discover her absence, a statue of the Madonna, before which Sister Beatrice had prayed, comes to life to take her place. The nuns discover the statue missing rather than Sister Beatrice when they arrive for matins. The play ends several years later when the real Sister Beatrice returns, deserted by her lover, near death, having borne a bastard child, now dead. The nuns discover her and do not realize the change in identity of the two Sister Beatrices. What they do notice is that the statue of the Madonna which had disappeared years before has been returned. They attribute this miracle to Sister Beatrice who insists that she has been gone for a long time and asks forgiveness for her sins. The play ends with a mystical scene of the beatification of Sister Beatrice.

Sister Beatrice is Svetlana Mamouljan. This piece, according to Mamouljan his most inspired work, is his homage

to the sister who ran away from the mother superior with an army officer, but was barely missed by that mother who was too busy with her charges, until she died tragically, in poverty, of illness, having borne a child. The beatification of Sister Beatrice is the beatification of Mamoulian's dead sister, his only sibling. He would never speak of Svetlana, and many of his close associates never knew he had a sister. This production, the culmination of everything he had been working toward, was his tribute and laying to rest of that deep love.

Even in this piece, the conflict between the destructive power of sexual passion and the ennobling power of true spiritual love for the female protagonist is Mamoulian's own. Perhaps it was an inner struggle that Svetlana shared, as the events of her life, mirrored in this play, indicate; events that were in some ways a replaying of the events and conflicts of the life of their mother, Virginia Kalantarian Mamoulian, as well. This ghost did not walk away after three days. It found its purest expression in Sister Beatrice and would resurface again and again in his subsequent work.

In February 1926, scenes from Carmen were repeated, and Mamoulian directed portions of Saint-Saens' Samson and Delilah and Beethoven's Fidelio. Again, archetypal characters engaged in characteristically Mamoulianian struggles. One heroine embodies the animalistic and the other the spiritual. One leads to destruction, the other to

salvation; the two sides of woman, the two sides of sexuality, and the two sides struggling inside Mamoulian. These presentations were followed in March by a scene from Lehar's The Count of Luxembourg. Mamoulian's final production in Rochester was a post-film divertimento entitled The Phonograph of Tomorrow. Mamoulian had continued to direct numerous short film accompaniments, all the while directing his full-length productions.¹⁷

Mamoulian made use of his three years in Rochester to develop his skills as a director. He was able to experiment with integrating drama, dance, music, lighting, sound, color, and decor. He combined psychological truth with rhythmic movement and suggestive scenic elements--an innovation in American opera. He was given the autonomy he required to control these various elements and explore his own versatility in repertory. Ultimately, he found opera too confining and frustrating a medium to integrate its ready-made form. Sister Beatrice and the short divertimenti proved to him that he needed to begin with a clean slate. The existing operatic repertory, even freed of its production conventions, was too set, too inflexible, too limiting, to mould to his own vision. A few years later he would find the film medium more suited to his purposes.

Mamoulian was overworked. He felt artistically stifled and aware that he had thoroughly exploited his experience in Rochester. He had greater ambitions. He wanted to be a man of history.

Throughout his tenure in Rochester, Mamoulian took short trips into New York City with the purpose of securing work on the New York stage. He had fixed his eye on Broadway from his arrival in America. By his final year in Rochester, he asked Eastman for assistance in providing him with contacts. Eastman discouraged him, perhaps out of self-interest, explaining how difficult it would be for someone so young, a foreigner with poor English, to survive the uncertainties and brutalities that would await him trying to make a career on Broadway. But he consented, if Mamoulian insisted, and provided him with two letters of recommendation: one to Jules Brulatour, and one to Otto Kahn. Nothing came from these leads or any of the job-hunting expeditions to New York.

The Theatre Guild was becoming the most prestigious theatrical producing organization in New York after less than a decade of existence. Its founder, Lawrence Langner, came to theatre as a second career. The native of Wales was a patent lawyer by profession, and never abandoned the practice, even at the height of the Guild's activities.

Langner explains:

The providence which guided our destiny now brought us into touch with a gifted individual who not only helped solve our school problem, but later on, many others as well. In the year 1926, we brought the Rochester American Opera Company, sponsored by George Eastman of Kodak fame, to play a short season in New York, and I met its impresario Vladimir Rosing, and a tall bespectacled young man, half-Russian, half-Armenian, named Rouben Mamoulian, who was associated with him, and conducted classes in the drama in Rochester. Mamoulian begged us to visit him and see some of his work. Later on I saw some of his pupils performing in

a play in Rochester, [Sister Beatrice] and was impressed with his ability as a dramatic teacher, and with his striking personality and enthusiasm for the theatre. As my patent practice brought me to Rochester at least twice a year, I usually spent the days with my clients and the evenings with Mamoulian, who walked my legs off, racing the streets of Rochester, telling me all he planned to do in the theatre if I would only bring him to New York.

Winnie Lenihan was succeeded by Hamilton MacFadden as head of the Theatre Guild School, and I bethought myself of the long-legged Mamoulian as dramatic teacher.¹⁸

This is the only account from an employer's perspective of how Mamoulian got one of his big breaks. This version, unlike the ones Mamoulian tells of other such transitions in his career, reveals how aggressive he was in pursuing employment. His own versions invariably have the offers coming to him, unsolicited.

In the summer of 1926, Mamoulian moved to New York City. Unfortunately, another teaching job was not what he had been looking for, and the job was actually not in New York City but in the suburb of Scarborough, New York. Begrudgingly, he submitted to a task he felt unworthy of his potential, certain that in exchange he would be rewarded with the opportunity to direct a Theatre Guild production on Broadway.

Chapter 3: THE THEATRE GUILD AND PORGY

Theresa Helburn and Lawrence Langner, the producers of the Theatre Guild, entered into a professional and personal association spanning four decades with Rouben Mamoulian in 1926 when he arrived in New York in the late summer to begin working at their school. The Theatre Guild had grown out of the Washington Square Players which, along with the Provincetown Playhouse, was one of the pioneering small theatres of New York dedicated to creating a non-profit "art" theatre. Both groups were committed to presenting innovative and experimental drama and staging, with a repertory company of actors, directors, and scenic artists. New York was decades behind Paris and Berlin in offering such an alternative to the "boulevard" theatre. Less than ten years later, the Theatre Guild, reorganized and renamed after World War I, had become the most adventurous theatre producer in this country. It introduced the plays of Chekhov, Shaw, Galsworthy, Molnar, and Čapek, and would soon introduce many of the mature plays of Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, S. N. Behrman, Sherwood Anderson, and Philip Barry. After several producing seasons, Langner and Helburn, despite Guild Board of Directors' resistance, began a theatre school. Actress Winifred Lenihan was hired to run

the school. She was followed by Hamilton McFadden. Among the pupils who attended the school prior to Mamoulia's arrival were the dancer Lucia Chase, who would found the American Ballet Theatre; Arlene Francis, who became a radio and television celebrity, and Cheryl Crawford, later Mamoulia's assistant stage manager on Porgy and still later a co-founder of the Group Theatre and a successful Broadway producer of musicals and the plays of Tennessee Williams. Sylvia Sidney, also a pupil at the Theatre Guild School, subsequently played the female lead in Mamoulia's second film, City Streets. Mamoulia's predecessors at the school each stayed for only a short time, as would Mamoulia. With Mamoulia's departure from the school one year later, the Guild abandoned the idea of a school.

During Mamoulia's year at the Theatre Guild School, he taught and directed four productions: Booth Tarkington's Clarence, Enter Madame, by Gilda Varesi Archibald and Dorothea Donn Byrne, Andreyev's He Who Gets Slapped, and George M. Cohan's Seven Keys to Baldpate. His interest in coming to New York was not to teach but to direct professionally. To this end he sought to overcome what he perceived to be an obstacle to his credibility--his foreign origin. In particular, with Seven Keys to Baldpate, he wanted to demonstrate his ability to direct a thoroughly American subject. He felt he had been assured by Langner that if he could demonstrate his abilities to the Guild board through his stagings with the school, he would be

considered for a position with the Theatre Guild proper. Yet no one from the board ever came to see his work despite repeated entreaties. Finally his persistence prevailed, and they reluctantly agreed to attend a matinee performance of the Cohan play. Langner remembers the experience:

He [Mamouljian] . . . soon after arrived in New York, set up shop, and began to pester the Guild directors in a most efficiently irritating manner, to come and see the plays given by his pupils and, of course, directed by himself. Finally he prevailed, and we went to a school production of The Seven Keys to Baldpate at the Garrick Theatre after carefully explaining that we could stay only a few minutes because of other appointments!¹

Such treatment infuriated Mamouljian, who had gone to all this trouble so they could see what he was capable of doing. But he was able to enjoy the satisfaction of another conquest with the holders of power:

The play was so well directed by Mamouljian and so well acted by his pupils, that the Guild directors stayed to the unbitter end.²

That was May 3, 1927. Mamouljian remembered it this way:

. . . I had been busy with the Theatre Guild School and did a lot of plays in Scarborough, our stock company there. But that was only to be a stepping stone to directing at the Theatre Guild. Eight months went by and they never came around and never offered me anything, so I caught them once at a party and I really gave them hell--all six of them. So they said, "All right. If we had a Russian play, a French play, a European play of some kind, but it so happens that we only have American plays now and you couldn't do any of them. You've only been here two and a half or three years," which made me rather angry, so they said, "All right, pick a play and we'll give you the Garrick Theatre for special matinee." So I picked George M. Cohan's Seven Keys to Baldpate and I stylized it completely. It became a rhythmic stylized production.³

Langner and Helburn had scheduled Dorothy and DuBose Heyward's Porgy to open their tenth anniversary season, an

adaptation of DuBose Heyward's recently published popular novel about life in a black coastal community outside Charleston, South Carolina. The appeal of the novel lay in its picturesque setting, its lyrical poetic quality, and its exotic Gullah dialect. Theresa Helburn, who had been a student at George Pierce Baker's lectures on playwriting at Harvard, worked with the Heywards to adapt the novel into dramatic form. Amongst the changes she instituted in the play was the full development of the character Bess and a shift of focus in the piece to the relationship between Porgy and Bess. The 1935 operatic version also included Helburn's changes from the novel. Gershwin indicated his intention of writing an opera on the subject as soon as the novel had been published, even before the play premiered. Other commitments kept Gershwin from work on the operatic version for several years.

Helburn had difficulty engaging a director. No one it was offered to wanted to take on the project. Langner and others speculated that directors at the time were aware of rumors circulating about the supposed difficulties one might expect to encounter working with black actors. Both the Heywards and Theresa Helburn felt that the black characters should be performed by black actors and not by white actors made up as blacks. Finally, and almost by default, the Guild offered the play to Mamoulian. He felt challenged by the opportunity to tackle a piece that no one wanted to risk taking on. He was sure of his abilities as a director, and a

success with a work so remote from his own experience would surely come across as an astounding accomplishment--which it did. The reviews and feature articles that appeared after the play opened, attempted to explain how a recent immigrant from Armenia could understand a culture and a people who were exotic even to New Yorkers, and portray their world so convincingly. The many projects Mamoulian accepted with American settings repeatedly offered this challenge, and his triumphs testified to his genius.

Mamoulian wanted to work on good material, but he was attracted to works that were problematic in some way; material remote from his experience in setting or genre, be it Americana, crime stories, horror, musicals, comedy, melodrama, or romances.

Mamoulian also enjoyed the challenge of stage or film "remakes." In 1930 he directed a remake of R. U. R. for the Theatre Guild and prided himself on having improved on the premiere production. Porgy and Bess, Oklahoma!, Carousel, and Arms and the Girl were also remakes of earlier Theatre Guild plays. The films Applause, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Song of Songs, Becky Sharp, The Mark of Zorro, Summer Holiday, and Silk Stockings would all be new versions of films done before. Golden Boy originated on the stage. We Live Again, Becky Sharp, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Song of Songs, A Farewell to Arms, St. Louis Woman, Sadie Thompson, and Lost in the Stars were all adapted from popular novels, a common practice in theatre and film. Mamoulian, however,

showed a special interest in revising existing material. In it he would see potential for stylized visualization. These were also works that had proved themselves with critics and audiences in their original form. He could then raise an already critically acknowledged work and, in part, appropriate it, making it his own. He prided himself on his extensive contributions to the writing or rewriting of the plays and the filmscripts he directed. Most of the projects he engaged in once his career was no longer active, after 1950, were the development of adaptations of famous works of literature or drama; namely, a musical version of Huckleberry Finn, with Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson; an updated version of Faust, called The Devil's Hornpipe, which was later rewritten as the filmscript for Never Steal Anything Small, and The Barber of Seville. As previously mentioned, he published a revised edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet, in which he altered the play to make the language more accessible to modern audiences.

Porgy held an attraction for all of the above reasons. It was a best-selling book. It had proved itself as a work of art, a legitimate subject with which to associate himself, and to surpass.

One can also see that the play's character relationships possess the elements typical of the Mamoulian opus. The original novel and the playscript presented to Mamoulian by the Guild end the same way. They both conclude with the characters of Catfish Row going about their daily lives as

they do at the play's opening. During the action, Crown and Bess arrive, cause their disturbances, and leave. Porgy is transformed. But when Bess leaves, he resumes his former life, alone. Mamouliau, as was his habit with unhappy endings, changed this one to the hopeful conclusion of Porgy setting out to find Bess. Although the ending is ambiguous, Mamouliau saw it as hopeful. For Mamouliau, Porgy is a Don Quixote, a dreamer, who sees the good nature and beauty in a world filled with evil and ugliness. He sees the potential for good in people. He is trusting and naive. His goodness and simplicity offset the evil in the world.

Porgy has never had an intimate relationship with a woman before Bess arrives. Bess is a sexually experienced woman who has attached herself to a series of men during her lifetime and lives a hedonistic existence, rejecting bourgeois decorum and family. She comes to Catfish Row as the consort of Crown, who represents brute male sexuality and power. He too rejects society's rules of acceptable behavior. Poor as they are, and peripheral to the dominant society, the other residents of Catfish Row, do embrace the conventional morality and work ethic. Characters such as Jake and Clara, a young fisherman and his wife who have a small child, Serena and Maria, hardworking laborers and tradeswomen, all embrace traditional Judeo-Christian values, proclaiming them frequently. They express their disapproval of Bess and Crown. They particularly resent Crown's intimations that, by following the rules, they are being

used by the system, and that he does not live by such foolish rules. Bess and Crown are also outsiders, in the literal sense of not being residents of Catfish Row but also as parasitic wanderers, and figuratively as being outside the mainstream. Porgy, too, is an outsider. He is an accepted member of the community, but he has no family affiliation and as a beggar does not labor to support himself. He depends on the patronage of the community and the outside white ruling class. He values not material things but the beauty and bounty of nature and the gift of life. He is close to nature. The communal harmony is disturbed when Bess and Crown arrive. They represent power and sexuality, destructive forces. Crown is physically powerful, virile, and dark-skinned. Bess's features are particularly African in appearance.

As the prompt script has it, "Crown is a huge negro of magnificent physique. . . Bess is slender, but sinewy; very black, wide nostrils and large but well formed mouth."⁴

Porgy is transformed by his contact with Bess. As a fellow outsider, he accepts her unconditionally. Through his contact with her, he emerges from a pristine state to a corrupted state through the power of eros. He destroys his male adversary and when Bess, who is herself only temporarily transformed in reverse by Porgy into a "good" woman, returns to her former state, she has served her function for Porgy as a vehicle of transformation. He is now a complete human being, both physically and spiritually.

The imbalance in nature, the hurricane, brought on by the corrupting presence of Bess and Crown, brings destruction, but also cleanses. Physical love yields to spiritual love. Drugs, sex, and brutality are represented by Bess and Crown. These darker, underlying forces are racially associated with blacks. The other residents of Catfish Row represent the mainstream community which must protect itself from baser instincts. Through these underlying, Dionysian forces come both destruction and renewal. Good and evil are juxtaposed throughout. Porgy is a folkloric morality play.

For Mamoulian the themes of this play provided rich source material for playing out his own inner drama. The Quixotic Porgy is Mamoulian, who struggles for power within a community, a family of people, at the same time challenging powerful a male adversary and destroying him in order to possess the muse that enables him to realize his full potential through the power of love.

The play also invited a stylized approach to staging. Mamoulian and set designer Cleon Throckmorton traveled to Charleston for several days to get a "feel" for the world of Porgy. There they saw the locations and people upon which the fictionalized settings and characters were based. Mamoulian was delighted with this exotic place. In newspaper interviews at the time, he remarked how he felt a kinship to the culture of the American South; that people from southern climates, whether from southern Russia, southern Europe, or

the American south, tend to share similar qualities that distinguish them from their northern counterparts:

Southern Negroes, like southern peoples everywhere, possess such vitality. Only among northern peoples do you find economy of gesture, of movement, of speech.⁵

It would be incorrect to conclude, however, that Mamouljian's affinity for Porgy, or any of the "black" shows that he became associated with, resulted from a shared identification with an oppressed ethnic minority. Bennett Oberstein in an interview with Mamouljian asked him:

BTO: . . . I thought maybe you came from a place like Armenia where people are not treated so well by the Russians, and there was wholesale slaughter of the people at certain points in their history, I wondered if perhaps you understood "suffering" more than certain well-fed Americans. Perhaps that's a little pretentious say, but---

RM: Are you saying to me that for any sensitive person, whether an artist or not, which may be questionable, that you have to undergo it personally in order to empathize with the suffering of the people?

BTO: Perhaps. . . . Certainly you can feel more strongly about it if you've been through it.

RM: I've always loved Negroes. I think they're wonderful people. I think they're immensely talented people. But I would certainly never do a play only because it's a Negro play out of any humanistic impulse, because that's not my profession. My profession is to do something worth doing on the stage. But if it happens to be potentially a worthwhile production, if it happens to be "humanistic" from that point of view, and important too, then you have a united impulse. But as far as the humanistic impulse is concerned, if you want to be "humanistic," then you'll send them some money or help them in some other ways, but you're not going to play havoc with your profession and do something that is not good theatre simply because it is humanistic.⁶

A consensus of reviewers remarked on the realism of the production--its settings and staging. Many scenes of daily life in Catfish Row were depicted, giving audiences a glimpse of an unfamiliar world. Most reviewers expressed

amazement at the authenticity and verisimilitude with which these southern blacks were depicted.⁷ Mamouljian was annoyed by this response because he felt he was working counter to a realistic depiction. He was trying to create a stylized vision of the world of Catfish Row.

I remember [Percy] Hammond was a great critic and he said how this young importation from Bulgaria, Mamouljian, did this utterly realistic play Porgy and he went after the scalp of the famous director, Belasco, David Belasco, and brought it home. And it just killed me. Because it was utterly stylized and here it is, Belasco, master of naturalism.⁸

What Mamouljian did was to work with each actor to create a real life for them, a task-oriented stage life, where each moment was motivated. At the same time these task-oriented actions were orchestrated into a rhythmically-accented sequence that created an overall stylized effect.

Mamouljian's use of rhythm in staging refers to the breaking down of script into beats, not just the scenes, but each line as if it were composed of musical notes strictly adhering to a series of shifting tempi. The effect, when fluid, generated momentum to a piece. The accented beats could be either readily discernible, often generating comical effect, or subtle beyond recognition, generating psychological impact subconsciously.

Audiences and reviewers were attracted to the play's primitivism, its movement, color, violence, and singing.⁹ And these aspects of the production were heightened by the use of avant-garde lighting effects, elaborate settings, careful duplication of the manners of the people and the appearance of the locale in which the action was set, and such fine coup-de-théâtre as sound effects and precise crowd movements. The audiences felt they were seeing a "slice of life," and

at the same time they were treated to high-order theatricalism.¹⁰

Two particular stage effects that illustrate Mamoulian's use of rhythm and stylization in Porgy were his use of shadows, and what became known as the "Symphony of Noises." One is an example of the visual application of rhythm and musical dynamic of crescendo, diminuendo, and accelerato; the other of the aural application. In almost every stage and film work he directed he used shadow effects. And the orchestration of crowd scenes as developed in the "Symphony of Noises" could be seen in most subsequent work of Mamoulian, especially in the film Love Me Tonight where it is duplicated from Porgy in a most precise manner.

In the scene of the saucer funeral in Serena's room, Mamoulian placed spotlights at the footlights so that giant shadows would be cast against the bare back wall of the set. As the funeral became more animated, the shifting shapes, sizes, and movement of the shadow projections would visually express the shifting dramatic rhythms and create an eerie, ominous effect, heightening the dramatic intensity of the moment.

The "Symphony of Noises" was an attempt musically to orchestrate dramatic action and create dramatic rhythm.

All the activity, the pounding, tooting, shouting and laughing is done to count. First I use one/two time. Then beat three is a snore--zzz!---from a Negro who's asleep; beat four silent again. Then a woman starts sweeping the steps--whish!---and she takes up beats two and four, so you have Boom!--whish!--zzz!--whish!--and so on. A knife sharpener, a shoemaker, a woman beating rugs and so on, all join in. Then the rhythm changes: four: four to two:

four, then to six: eight. All the natural rhythms of Charleston are syncopated.¹¹

As theatrical as this device is in its stylization, Oberstein notes that in spite of Mamoulian's firm denial of having been influenced as a director by anyone, and his avowed departure from the work of Stanislavsky, the influence of Stanislavsky on Mamoulian is unmistakable. The very breakdown of scenes into dramatic beats which characterizes the Stanislavsky approach to directing implies a rhythmic basis for approaching staging.

Oliver Saylor noted the influence of the Moscow Art Theatre on the piece [Porgy]:

'In its crescendo, retardando, diminuendo and crescendo again, Porgy has been orchestrated as nothing seen on our stage since Stanislavsky first showed us Tolstoy's Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch'. . .

Stanislavsky's direction of The Snow Maiden, recounted in his autobiographical My Life in Art, suggests strong parallels with the hurricane and wake-up scenes of Porgy. . .

'Imagine the number of people necessary to create the storm effect: actors, stage hands, supernumeraries, and even office help were given whistles, castanets, and other peculiar machines for the purpose of making noise. Some in our backstage 'orchestra' even used their feet. . . . When the sound reached its highest note, a snow-storm composed of white confetti blown by large ventilators was let loose upon the stage.'¹²

Mamoulian was also, no doubt, influenced by his experience directing opera where every aspect of mise en scène must be derived from the rhythm of the musical score. In rehearsal he would direct with the script propped up on a music stand, keeping time with a conductor's baton, a metronome, and a whistle. He would address his black cast as "children" although his own thirtieth birthday nearly

coincided with the opening of Porgy, and most of the cast members were close to Mamoulian in age or older.¹³

Mamoulian gave many interviews to the press and engaged clipping services throughout his career to collect everything in print pertaining to his career. He also accepted speaking engagements to discuss his work. For example, Mamoulian reportedly spoke to the Poetry Society of Charleston, South Carolina, in January 1929, where he stated:

'When I was first given the script of "Porgy" to read . . . I said that it was the first play written about negroes that justified the title of folk play. It contains no propaganda but gives an artist's impression of negro life in Charleston. It is the first play to get the substance of the negro soul and negro life and bring it forth glowingly alive.'¹⁴

The reporter goes on to say:

Mr. Mamoulian described the difficulties in gathering together a cast of negroes and in training them to play their parts ¹⁵

Years later Mamoulian recalled working with his black cast:

The actors started acting in a "white" fashion at the beginning of the rehearsal period, because they thought that's what I would want them to do. I thought it was disastrous and I told them so, because they were only doing themselves an injustice and are marvelous when they're being themselves. They finally grasped what I meant and came to their own discovery that black is beautiful I tried to bring their consciousness out of them ¹⁶

Howard Barnes, in Theatre Magazine, December 1929, compared and contrasted the directorial approaches of Mamoulian with the Theatre Guild's most prominent director, Philip Moeller, after observing rehearsals of both men, and

stated that Moeller developed the staging in collaboration with the actors, letting them guide things, while Mamoulian:

. . . on the other hand, while spending the same painstaking care on the details of a play . . . does not allow the actors to give their own interpretations to parts. He enters the rehearsal period with the entire course of his direction carefully planned out in advance and waits patiently for his project to be realized, spending an immense amount of time on stage movement.¹⁷

Mamoulian let it be known that his contribution to rewriting the play was as crucial as his complete credit for the staging and training his "children" to play their parts. In recalling his acceptance of Theresa Helburn's offer to direct Porgy he said:

It was a very bad script. And of course to me it was a very great break, but I walked back in and I said, "I don't want to do this. You can't do this. It's not a stage play." So they said, "What's wrong with it?" So I told them, and they said, "Why don't you put it down in writing?" So I dictated fifteen pages of what the thing needed. But DuBose Heyward and Dorothy were in London. The Guild said, "Send it to the authors and see what they say." So the fifteen pages went out to them and they read it and they sent a cable agreeing, "with every point Mamoulian makes; we'll start right away." So we re-wrote the whole script. And that's the way it came about.¹⁸

What Mamoulian fails to take into account is Helburn's own considerable contribution to the revisions. In regard to the staging and his amazing ability to recreate the world of southern blacks on stage, Leigh Whipper, who played "the crab man," a creation of his own not originally in the novel, had this account of rehearsals:

I found out very quickly that Mamoulian didn't understand the type of Negro with which he was dealing. And I also knew that he knew very little about Negroes. And I found out through Cleon Throckmorton, designer of Porgy, that his only experience with Negroes was his

trip to Charleston when they went down there and saw Catfish Row So I watched him very closely. Now Mamouljian was the youngest director I had had . . . I saw how he was going about his work and I didn't want to butt in and tell him he was wrong, so I thought the best thing for me to do was to leave the company, because I wouldn't come down with the way Mamouljian was having them do things It would bring laughs but he didn't know it.¹⁹

Whipper told Mamouljian he had to quit the show and explained why:

Well, I said, you don't know these people I said, I see you trying to do the church scene the wake for Robbins . . . do you want to see the scene unrehearsed? He says yes. I says, all right you come to Harlem with me and I'll show it to you. Well, he took the opportunity. Well, I wanted him to see first the type of people he was dealing with I carried him to the club, the Association of Trade and Commerce, and I introduced him to a couple of lawyers and a couple of doctors that were in there playing bridge and he didn't say anything, but I could see his reaction to what he was going through. . .

. . . . From there he took Mamouljian to the YMCA, then on to Small's Paradise where they watched the waiters opening the show in a routine in which they spun their trays and did a break and went to their stations. As Whipper said, "He was content to stay there," but they stayed for only a portion of the floor show and then walked to a store-front church at 136th Street.

By the time we got to within a hundred feet of the church you could hear clapping, and so we went on in. . . and took seats at the rear, and we heard the singing and all the shouting, the amens and all, you know, and we stayed there. There were some testimonies given and then they looked for a collection and we put in our(s). . . and came out. Mamouljian says, "I see what you mean." I said, "Yes, you don't know these people . . . Now you let them be themselves and not take up that tragic way you have of trying to put fright into Evelyn Ellis. Let her put her fright

into it and you'll have a scene.

The sequel to this evening according to Whipper, was that next morning, when the cast assembled at the theatre for rehearsal, the officials were having a conference and the actors were notified that they would be up later. When Mamoulian did come up, instead of addressing them with his customary, "Now, children," he said, "Now, folks, I want to tell you something."

He said, "I want you to forget everything I told you and be yourselves," and they applauded. He said, "Leigh Whipper took me to Harlem last night, and I have the understanding of what is to be done, and if there are any changes to be made, I'll make them."

His technique from that time on, by Whipper's account, was to let his actors first do it as they felt it should be done and then shape it and fit it to both of their requirements. This, is, of course, a widely accepted directorial approach, and Whipper consistently maintains that this was done in the remaining rehearsals.²⁰

Whipper also mentioned that the play was never "set" in its precise staging and retained an improvisational quality throughout the run of the show. It was to Mamoulian's credit, contrary to his habit, that he stepped aside and trusted his actors to know more about what they were doing than he did. It is a side of his history that is never mentioned in any of his own accounts where he portrays himself as all-knowing and all-doing. The problem of giving credit where credit is due and not where it is not would

increase with time and contribute to employment difficulties and alienation from peers in later years.

Maurice Ravel supposedly saw Porgy and remarked that it was "the best opera he'd ever seen." ²¹ Max Reinhardt, who was in New York at the time with his company performing Jedermann and Dantons Tod, commented in a N. Y. World interview that Mamoulian would refer to repeatedly in future years, that seeing Porgy was one of his "great experiences in the theatre," and that the play

combines convincing truth with the utmost stylization and possesses a luminousness that originates not with single stars but with the intensity of the entire ensemble. It is truly enchanting to watch the passions rise, increase and pass into song--those tremendously grandiose choruses--and to watch the groups now rhythmically concentrating, now scattering again and, as they scatter, throwing spooky shadows behind him. I urged my actors at once to see Porgy. All were as fascinated as I, who would like to see it and hear it again and again.²²

Porgy embodied the themes that run through virtually all of Mamoulian's work. It is a work in which he realized his basic aesthetic principles. He identified himself with this play more than with any other. It made his career, and he would return to Porgy several times. From his work in Porgy, he developed a basic vocabulary that reappeared in virtually every production to follow.

Decades later Mamoulian recalled his experience with Porgy and remarked:

In 1927, with PORGY I was King of Harlem. They had parties for me, it was wonderful. They're the most marvelous people. They're personally so filled with affection.²³

Mamouljian would never again be accorded the single-handed acclaim for a stage production that he received for Porgy. As he would say on many occasions, Porgy made him. It was a fortuitous concatenation of events which led to Porgy and the career that followed. Surely, he would not have been given an opportunity to work, untried, for the Theatre Guild had not Lawrence Langner held on to the patent business that brought him to Rochester on a regular basis. And Porgy afforded Mamouljian the opportunity to work on a play that so uniquely lent itself to the realization of stylized, rhythmic movement, pictorial composition, and integration of music, dance, and design elements where he, rather than star performers or playwright, would receive the bulk of the critical attention. With this play, he could be king. Only in film would so much of a production center on his contribution.

Chapter 4: THE BROADWAY YEARS: THE TWENTIES

Porgy ran for 367 performances, the third longest-running Mamoulian stage production after Oklahoma! and Carousel, which respectively had 2248 and 890 performances. Porgy also toured nationally and to London. In London, the play was received with more reserve than in New York or on tour across America. Racially derogatory language characterizes many of the London reviews. London's Sunday Graphic referred to it as "Bess of the Darkeyvilles"¹ and The Sunday Express review was entitled, "Ten Little Nigger Boys."² The New York cast which traveled to London had difficulty registering at their hotel and were forced to take their meals in the basement. In general, the London reviews were less kind than those in New York had been, but the criticisms voiced were ones that had appeared in New York only in more subdued terms. Yet the nature of these criticisms characterized the negative commentary surrounding much of Mamoulian's stage and film work; namely, that it was theatrical without any deeper impact--form over content.

Judged as a spectacle, 'Porgy'. . . is in the front rank; judged as a play it has few merits. . . Environment has displaced the soul as the subject matter. . . . this pathetic finish. . . seemed to me just a convenient peg on which to hang many striking stage pictures. And it reeked of

sentimentality. Further, the love scenes smacked of the Lyceum in the halcyon days of melodrama, and when Bess sniffed up some cocaine her extravagantly dramatic method of doing so was simply laughable 'Porgy' is. . . a marvelous spectacular achievement, but it is little more.³

The Spectator succinctly pronounced it "A production rather than a play."⁴ Indeed, it was the potential for spectacular staging effects and painterly pictorial compositions that would guide Mamoulian's selection of material to direct.

His second New York stage production gave way even more blatantly to opulent stage effect at the expense, some thought, of the playwright's central dramatic purpose. The play was Eugene O'Neill's Marco Millions. This was the first O'Neill play to be produced by the Theatre Guild. It opened at the Guild Theatre January 9, 1928, and ran 102 performances. Marco Millions is O'Neill's Babbitt play about the crass western capitalist Marco Polo, the first businessman to come to the Far East to exploit its resources. He comes and goes without acquiring any understanding of or interest in the culture and philosophy behind the place he visits. His insensitivity to anything but capital gain betrays a poverty of spirituality. His presence is a destructive one, not maliciously so, but no less dire in its consequences for being well intentioned. Mamoulian wished to play down the admittedly obvious political message of the play. As always, his concern was artistry, not politics. So, for him, the task in directing the play was

to provide the audience with a theatrical feast for the senses. He maintained that people do not come to the theatre to be lectured to, they come to be entertained, and the worst sin you can commit in the theatre is to bore the audience.

Marco Millions must have appealed to Mamoulian for several reasons. It addressed the struggle between the spiritual and the animalistic in man. On a deeper psychological level, it also contained the elements of family conflict underlying most of his work. The "genius" theme is present in the play in the character of the protagonist Marco. The opportunity to direct O'Neill's first play for the Theatre Guild added to Mamoulian's own sense of accomplishment. He could add this to his list of conquests of the great men of history. Finally, the play is a director's dream for someone of Mamoulian's sensibility, offering ample opportunity for striking visual impressions through stylized movement and pictorial composition with large groups amidst scenic splendor and opulent costumes. He was able to stylize the movement of the characters, contrasting the frenzied, clumsiness of the Polos with the elegant, serene deportment of the Kaans. Mamoulian interpreted the large groupings in the play as reminiscent of a medieval processional. A number of stylized tableaux provided him the opportunity to deploy his actors for sculpturally visual effect. Mamoulian employed an exotic assortment of

eastern instruments on stage for their authentic background music and sounds.

Reviewers complimented Mamoulian's work. Attention was drawn to the stunning pictorializations, exotic music, and stylized movement. This time, it was considered a welcome distraction from the play's text which was criticized for its monotonous, didactic message. Mamoulian deliberately set out to compensate with spectacle for what he considered a weak script. To this end, he claimed not only to have helped the play through his staging, but, as with every project he worked on, to have helped the playwright by suggesting cuts and other changes to the script. Long after O'Neill's death Mamoulian repeatedly told the story of how the Guild management advised him that O'Neill never made cuts and would not allow his work to be manipulated by directors. Mamoulian saw his challenge; another opportunity to test the wisdom of Grandma Kate, and slay his Goliath. He tells how he went to see O'Neill in his hotel room:

I went down to the Wentworth Hotel. The door opened and there was this magnificent man, with those smouldering eyes I walked in and I got real cold feet. I thought, My God, here I am. Here is the great Eugene O'Neill and I'm going to tell him about cutting his play? I really got cold feet. So he sat on the bed and I sat on a chair. He said, "What did you want to see me about?" I said, "First of all, Mr. O'Neill, I want to tell you how flattered I am and how pleased I am that you want me to direct MARCO MILLIONS." "Well," he said, "I thought PORGY was magnificent. Therefore I thought you would be the man for this."⁵ Then came a big pause and he kept looking at me. I asked myself where do I get the courage? So finally I said, "Well, Mr. O'Neill, look. I'm speaking as a

director. I feel that this play, in terms of a stage production, could be improved in its effect if you made some cuts." He said, "Cuts?" He went red in the face with anger. I said, "Mr. O'Neill, it's your play. Let me tell you about it. If you don't agree, fine. I'll be happy to do it as it stands." He repeated the word, "Cuts." "All right," he said, "sit down." So I sat next to him on the bed and I opened the book. I said, "Take this, for example," about many moments in the play, and I kept on explaining my opinion from a stage point of view. He grabbed a thick blue pencil and said, "From here to here?" Yes. Next? Fine. I said, "No, No. That one's too much. You stop at such and such a line." He said, "Fine. All right." Every cut he approved. Well, we ultimately became very good friends. ⁶

The conclusion to this story, like all such stories of Mamouljian's was a variation of "And we fell in love with each other." To counterpoint Mamouljian's version of O'Neill's feeling about capitulating to Mamouljian, consider what Arthur and Barbara Gelb say about O'Neill's experience on Marco Millions,

One day during rehearsals for Marco Millions which had begun on November 22, Rockmore⁷ picked up O'Neill at the theatre for a lunch appointment. O'Neill was silent as he and Rockmore walked away from the theatre and Rockmore, knowing his moods, did not try to make conversation. At length O'Neill said, "You know what I just did? I just agreed to cut a whole scene that was written with my blood." Although O'Neill had consented to make cuts in Marco in order to pare expenses and conform to the inadequate stage equipment of the Guild Theatre, he was not happy about it--no happier than he ever was with the production of any of his plays. . . . ⁸

O'Neill was supposedly very unhappy about the deletion of a series of symbolic groupings that repeat throughout the play depicting various racial backgrounds and walks of life.

The representativeness of this symbolic group and its cumulative effect--or lack of effect--on Marco was significant to the play, and the Guild decision

to drop it as costly and unnecessary window dressing was an artistic mistake. What with this and similar deletions, Marco Millions, as produced, was not the play O'Neill had written. . . .⁹

Mamouljian's need to control his collaborators, as always, extended to his actors. "Every gesture made by every person on the stage, even a minor character, must be supervised and controlled by the director."¹⁰ When asked about the lead female actress in the play, Margalo Gilmore who played Princess Kukachin, Mamouljian's recollection, typically, had to do with her resistance to him and subsequent acquiescence.

I remember that she was playing a scene, sitting on a chair down front. She said, "You can't leave this here." I said, "Why not?" She said, "It's too close to the audience." I said, "Now, look, Margalo. You're either an actress or you're not an actress. You can't do it because you're too close to the audience, so I'm trying to help you." She repeated, "I can't do it," and got very angry. Well, she did it and she did it very well, and after that she hugged me and she said, "You were right."¹¹

Marco was played by Alfred Lunt. Others in the cast included Morris Carnovsky, Albert Dekker, Henry Travers, Dudley Digges, and Sanford Meisner. Henry Fonda and Clifford Odets also appeared as extras in the production. Other than being pleased with the opportunity to work with Lunt, Mamouljian had nothing much to say about the actors other than the story of having won the submission of Miss Gilmore for which she, of course, was grateful.

Sanford Meisner, who would go on, as a number of other Theatre Guild employees, to form The Group Theatre, and later his own Neighborhood Playhouse, remembered that

Mamoulian focussed all of his rehearsal attention on Lunt and Gilmore, leaving the others with virtually no direction. This goes against most reports of Mamoulian working closely with even the most minor cast member to create a stage life. Meisner recalled that the production was a lavish and stunning spectacle but little else. Overall he ". . . didn't think much of Mamoulian as a director."¹²

The other story Mamoulian liked to tell about his experience with Marco Millions was how he won a battle over territory with set designer Lee Simonson over who would light the show. Mamoulian recalls:

I said that I would start lighting tomorrow. Lee Simonson said, "Now wait a minute. I am the greatest lighting expert in America. I light all the plays I design." I said, "So do I." He said, "That's my job; it's in the contract." I said, "Well, O.K., I should have thought of it earlier. It didn't occur to me. I'll tell you what you do, Lee; you go on and light it and I'll give you three days, then let me see what you've done. If it's all right, I won't argue with you. I definitely should have thought of it before." So he took the three days and he lit three scenes out of eighteen. At that rate he would have taken months to light the play.¹³ I saw the three scenes and I didn't like them. So I went to the management of the Guild and said, "Look, he's one of you, but this is impossible. It's not my kind of lighting and it's taking an extremely long time, which I can't afford, so either I light it or I bow out." So of course the decision was that I light it. I remember that Simonson got up and took a big phone book and tried to tear it in a rage and then threw it at my feet and then walked out to become my "enemy," as it were. After the play opened we became friends.¹⁴

So goes another story about overcoming a powerful adversary and securing not only submission from the opponent but love as well.

Mamoulian's discussion of his work is limited to technical achievements and how he accomplished particular moments in his staging that generated spectacular effect. What we do not hear is any discussion of the content of the particular plays and filmscripts; what they meant to him, how he saw them, what he was trying to communicate with them in the way of content. He says he was opposed to the notion of presenting spectacular effects for their own sake. Yet we almost never hear what the material means to him. Andrew Sarris characterized Mamoulian as an "innovator who ran out of innovations,"¹⁵ in explaining Mamoulian's diminished status as a director in later years after having contributed and achieved so much.

When pressed to express his views on the fact that the protagonist of Marco Millions undergoes only little change as a character from start to finish, that he makes no discoveries, revealing his businessman's limited potential as a human being, in spite of his entrepreneurial success and power, Mamoulian rejected the notion and surprisingly characterized Marco as at first

. . . young, idealistic, poetic. Then as far as I can remember, he changes gradually into the Babbitt type of businessman. That certainly is change, isn't it? Of course Alfred Lunt was absolutely superb in the role.¹⁶

Marco's imperviousness to the cost others around him pay for his lack of understanding and insight, his perception of everyone and everything in the world as an extension of himself, out there merely for the taking to satisfy

his needs, is precisely the horror that O'Neill depicted in the play. When Mamoulian was reminded of all the heartbreak Marco unwittingly causes others, Mamoulian replied,

What's wrong with having a play like that? Of an individual against an environment that does not affect him in any way?¹⁷

Mamoulian distorted the play to suit his vision of a young genius, poet, idealist, who fights against the environment in order to maintain his vision. This was Mamoulian's lifelong struggle; to have it his way against all odds and at all costs to win. What Mamoulian saw was a character who never yields to compromise, and because of this, realizes all of his dreams. Mamoulian never thought to question that dream and how it can rob one in this society of his soul.

Mamoulian cut the epilogue of the play in which Marco sits in the audience, yawns, and gets up to leave the auditorium through the exit to enter a limousine. He is transformed into the modern businessman who goes to the theatre for an after-dinner treat. A Brechtian approach to this play, if done well, might have provoked the audience--alienated them in just the way O'Neill seems to have intended with the piece. But such an approach would not have fit Mamoulian's interpretation of the play or his vision of theatre as an artistic medium devoid of political content or purpose. For Mamoulian, the only purpose in deliberately destroying the

theatrical illusion would be to call attention to the magic of it all the more. Mamoulian wanted to create beauty. Art should be an antidote to politics, not a forum for it, he thought.

Mamoulian admired art that was timeless, not temporal, in its choice of issues to address. He wanted his art to be universal and timeless, to join the pantheon of Michelangelo and Leonardo. Mamoulian chose to use Marco Millions to portray a universal conflict of a young achiever who struggles between his animalistic impulses and his spiritual ones--whether to submit to prostitutes or remain faithful to his betrothed for twenty years until he returns home. Distraction by these female representations of base sexuality threatens his resolve to fulfill his quest for great personal achievement. The others in the protagonist's life exist only to assist the hero in his pursuit. Ultimately they are dispensed with, once they have served their purpose. Mamoulian sees nothing wrong with this. He sees Marco as a hero who does not allow outside influences to distract him from the fulfillment of his genius.

In 1949, Mamoulian encountered a similar situation with a play loaded with political content, Maxwell Anderson's Lost in the Stars, based on the Alan Paton novel, Cry, the Beloved Country. There, too, Mamoulian insisted on ridding the play of its political content. He was able to impose significant changes on the writing of

the piece so that the political conflicts were taken out of their temporal baseness and lifted to the realm of the universal and timeless; to maintain the theatre as a temple of beauty, and, in fact, to insure that nothing competed for attention with his visual stylization.

Mamoulian, who cultivated an appearance of intellectual sophistication and unmatched erudition as a director, when asked to comment about Brecht's theories replied, "I'm frankly not familiar with Brecht's theories."¹⁸

Beyond the world of his own genius, there was detachment.

Mamoulian ended his anecdote about his power struggle with Lee Simonson with conquest and restored good relations. But events following the production of Marco Millions indicate otherwise. Simonson was not happy in his defeat. He was so disturbed by Mamoulian's actions over the lighting, and possibly other undocumented altercations over the set and its use, that as a member of the Guild board he issued an ultimatum demanding that Mamoulian not direct for the Guild if he, Simonson, were to continue with them. Mamoulian had not endeared himself to Philip Moeller, Herbert Biberman, or Guild board members Helen Westley and Maurice Wertheim. Only Langner and Helburn championed their discovery in the dispute.

The result was that Mamoulian, in spite of his success with Porgy and Marco Millions, was not offered another directorial assignment with the Guild for nearly a year.

The year 1928 saw such plays as Sidney Howard's The Silver Cord, Maxwell Anderson's Gypsy, Elmer Rice's Street Scene, Philip Barry's Holiday, Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's The Front Page, Sophie Treadwell's Machinal, Eugene O'Neill's Dynamo, plus Eva La Galliene's Civic Repertory Theatre productions, and revues produced by Ziegfeld and others on Broadway. Mamoulian was either not offered any of these shows to direct or turned them down. Since none of them appears in his private papers accessed to date, one might deduce that none of the above was offered to him, despite his claims that the success of Porgy led to a plethora of offers to direct.

Mamoulian's next directing assignment was not a distinguished dramatic work. The Theatre Guild had a rule that prohibited it from producing the plays of any of its board members. Lawrence Langner was not only a patent lawyer turned theatrical producer, but also an aspiring playwright. He wanted to produce his play These Modern Women outside the Guild and needed a director. The weak script did not appeal to a number of prominent directors to whom it was offered, but Mamoulian owed his opportunities with the Guild to Langner's support. He owed Langner a favor. But, having been recently barred from working for the Guild, he also needed a job. He said he found the play appealing because it offered an opportunity to demonstrate that he was versatile, capable of directing intimate character drama and not just moving

crowds and creating spectacle. Mamoulian was keenly aware of press notices and may have felt stung by the negative criticisms of his work as glib. Strangely, for someone who prided himself on his dramaturgical abilities, Mamoulian rarely worked on strong scripts. On Broadway, the best plays were not offered to him to direct, and in Hollywood he was rarely given top screenwriters to work with. With a weak script, the director has an opportunity to make his own work the focus of attention. In selecting a script to direct, Mamoulian looked less at the quality of the writing than at the possibilities of a vehicle to display his directorial showmanship, his genius.

These Modern Women opened at the Eltinge Theatre February 13, 1928, and ran for only twenty-four performances. The drawing-room comedy concerns a young married woman, a "modern," who rejects family traditions and the female role in marriage. She sheds the drudgery of housewifery for a career as a writer. She sends her eight-year old son to a psychoanalyst and fashionably banters amateur psychoanalysis in social conversation. Her liberation is put to the test when her husband suggests an "open marriage." Her experiment fails, confirming the wisdom of abiding by traditional gender roles. Lawrence Langner, being the head of the Theatre Guild, was able to interest talent to work on the project, in spite of the lack of distinction in the writing. Producer, and later theatre scholar, Kenneth

Macgowan, and Robert Rockmore, Eugene O'Neill's attorney and friend, co-produced the play for Langner. Cleon Throckmorton designed the sets, possibly under an obligation to Langner similar to Mamoulian's. Actors Minor Watson, Alan Mowbray, and Chrystal Herne were engaged for the cast. Reviews ranged from lukewarm to negative, with most praising those involved but finding little to recommend in the play itself. Mamoulian received unelaborated courteous acknowledgement, when mentioned at all.

An employment opportunity, capable personnel, a debt to Langner, and a chance to show another side to his talents were all reasons for taking on this project. Beyond these reasons, the content of the play contains some elements which are consistent with the Mamoulian opus; namely, central characters who live outside conventional bourgeois sexual *morés* and gender roles, a leading character who wants to free herself from the pettiness of day-to-day life in order to fulfill her artistic potential and succeeds in doing so by defying authority and conventional wisdom--a character who "listens to her voices." The play also contains elements of family life that mirror Mamoulian's own; a mother and wife who is unfulfilled in her traditional role, who goes outside of the family to pursue her artistic aspirations and succeeds at them. The tacit acceptance of marital infidelity along with the inevitable accompanying hurt

and dissolution of family life are all part of the world Mamoulian experienced while growing up.

Two months after These Modern Women opened, Mamoulian's next production, Cafe Tomaza, ran for one performance in a pre-Broadway tryout at the Jamaica, New York, Cort Theatre, April 20, 1928. The play, by William DuBois, translated from a Russian original, was originally supposed to have starred Alla Nazimova, but she never participated in the project. With Cafe Tomaza, Mamoulian had an opportunity to work on a Russian subject, originally with the hope of working with the famous Moscow Art Theatre actress. He also recalled years later that, "The production initially contained a fifteen-minute scene done in rhythmic pantomime which . . . [he] later eliminated."¹⁹ Mamoulian would get a chance to work in the theatre with Nazimova in 1930, directing Turgenev's A Month in the Country, and a decade later directing the film Blood and Sand.

Cafe Tomaza, together with Mamoulian's next effort after a long summer hiatus,²⁰ Women, by Edith and Edward Ellis, did not make it to Broadway or run more than one try-out performance. Because review material and scripts are lacking, and Mamoulian made very little comment about them in retrospective interviews, it is difficult to assess the circumstances that led to his working on these projects that never officially opened, or what intrinsic interest, if any, they held for him. Women played at the

Adelphi Theatre in Philadelphia, September 10, 1928.

Becvar had this to say about Mamoulian's work of Women,

Although Mamoulian's direction of Women was called "admirable" by Variety, the newspaper found fault with the lighting. Mamoulian had decided to experiment with shifting lighting intensities throughout the production according to the changes in mood. The result (at least to one reviewer) was distracting and more appropriate to musical comedy than to a serious drama.²¹

Mamoulian's career on Broadway slid steeply after his auspicious debut with Porgy. The opening of the 1928-29 season continued the downward trend for him, but another patron stepped in and stemmed the flow of failures of Mamoulian's busy first year on Broadway. On November 27, 1928, Mamoulian opened Congai, by Harry Harvey and Carleton Hindreth, at New York's Sam H. Harris Theatre. Mamoulian's account of how he met Sam Harris and secured the job directing Congai may be questionably as apocryphal as his other accounts of meetings with great men:

I had never met him, but on our first meeting he said to me, "I have two scripts. One is for Helen Mencken, the other for Jeanne Eagles. . . . Would I be interested? "Well," I said "I'd like to read the scripts." One was CONGAI and the other was a play about a lady pirate. . . . I read the plays and liked them both. Harris asked me to have dinner with him, so we had a lovely dinner at Dinty Moore's, he gave me a big cigar, we lit up and he said, "So, would you like to do a play for me?" I said yes and he asked, "What are your terms?" I told him what I wanted and he said, "I'll up it." So he upped my terms. He said, "Is this agreeable to you?" I said, "Certainly." So he said, "All right, shake hands. That's it." There was no contract.²²

In taking into account the accuracy of this bit of history, consider Mamoulian's recollection of how he came

to direct Women, which opened more than two-and-a-half months prior to Congai:

. . . I did CONGAI, and soon after that I was to have done a play with Jeanne Eagles, but she died. That's why I did that play called WOMEN. . . out of loyalty to Sam Harris. He was on the spot. So I took it over.²³

Again, as with all his projects, what stands out most in Mamoulian's account of his career is not issues and meaning of the work in question but conquests and comeuppances with formidable colleagues:

. . . did I tell you what happened with an actor in CONGAI? . . . Well, that's quite a tale. This will show you who's in charge. The lead opposite Mencken was George Baxter. . . Tall, dark-haired, handsome guy. We rehearsed four weeks, then we went to Philadelphia, where we opened. George Baxter came on and did things that had not been directed. I said to myself that he must be sick or something. So I went backstage and asked him what he was doing, and he said, "What do you mean, what am I doing?" And I replied, "Well, you're not following the direction, for one thing." He said, "Well, I followed it through rehearsals, but now I'm going to do it my way." This is one week, mind you, before we're due to come into New York. So I went to Sam Harris, the producer of the play, and told him what George Baxter was doing on stage was absolutely intolerable. I also warned that if these kinds of actions were going to continue, I was going to quit as of now, because I wasn't going to have an actor saying those kinds of things to me, and doing that kind of performance. . . So Sam, who was a real prince, said, "Rouben, do whatever you think is right."²⁴

Mamoulian decided that in spite of the approaching opening night, it was important to assert his authority, even if it meant sacrificing the quality of the early performances. He continues, describing how he fired Baxter. Without any notification, Baxter arrived at the theatre the next night only to find his replacement

occupying his dressing room, preparing to go on stage. An indignant Baxter was silenced when informed by the stage manager that he had been fired.

Well, the guy couldn't believe it. . . .Paul opened in New York and he was fine, everything was good. Now the punch line to this whole story. Thirty years go by and I'm in Hollywood. I remember I drove to a studio to talk to Walter Wanger [producer of the film Cleopatra] . . . and as I'm walking into the office building, out comes George Baxter. . . . I said, "Hello, George, how are you?" And he responded, "How are you, Mr. Mamoulian?" And I went on in as he was exiting. After my session there I got into my car and there's a note on the driving wheel which says, "Dear Mr. Mamoulian: I want to apologize for my disgraceful behavior on CONGAI. I was young and stupid. Now I've grown up and have married and I know much better. So please will you forgive me?" And that note came thirty years after the fact.²⁵

In the cast list of the play at the Sam H. Harris Theatre in New York, there is no mention of a Paul Burke. There is a Maurice Burke, who played a character named Captain Paul Lehrisson. In recalling the incident Mamoulian probably combined the character's first name with the actor's last name. As for Burke playing "the lead opposite Helen Mencken," the role of Captain Lehrisson, is a minor one, even in comparison to the other male roles, none of which is very large. By making him the lead, Mamoulian is able to create another chapter in a history where the central theme is the struggle for assertion of power. The conclusion is always victory for Mamoulian and eventual gratitude by the broken adversary. The question of who is in charge was a very sensitive

one. Control over the world around recurs consistently as a theme in his life and work.

Set in Vietnam in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the plot of Congai concerns Thi-Linh, daughter of a French soldier who has deserted his Vietnamese mistress or congai. We first see Thi-Linh as a young woman in a jungle village in love with a young native man. Being racially mixed, she is rejected by the boy's parents as unsuitable for marriage and realizes that there is no hope for a good life in this environment. Embittered, she goes to Saigon and manages to rise through the ranks of the French military as mistress to one officer after another. They use her, and she uses them. At first she finds herself falling in love with her mentors. She is a very devoted concubine. But each liason ends up the same way: with her being abandoned. After years of serial relationships, she is left cynical and embittered. She never forgets her first love in the jungle and the love child she had with him and left there. One day he finds her and just when it seems as if she might be able to break away from her life of degradation and return to the society of her jungle village, another disaster strikes and she is left trapped, without any alternative but to remain a congai to the French who will never accept her as one of their own. Each of her lovers, one by one, leaves her for a

French wife back in Paris. The play ends with her as a victim of racial prejudice and gender subjugation.

The authors, Harry Hervey and Carleton Hindreth, spent many years in French Indo-China experiencing the world they depict in the play, which is reminiscent of Pierre Loti's Madame Chrysanthemum in its depiction of the purity and innocence of the native population who are gradually corrupted by the westerners. The westerners have no respect for the natives as human beings and think nothing of exploiting them and then disposing of them when they are no longer useful. Congai, like the Loti story, focusses on a female character, a concubine, who undergoes experiences similar to the Japanese geisha at the hands of westerners.

The play received mixed reviews. Some critics found the plot too episodic, the dialogue forced, and the degrading references to sexuality of every orientation, smutty. But the play had a successful run of 137 performances. The play appealed to the then current taste for exoticism, illicit sex, and wit.

The play must have appealed to Mamoulion on several levels. From a technical standpoint, the play afforded numerous opportunities for scenic and melodramatic effect. Critics remarked on the impressiveness of the jungle scenes in which mist rose from the stage, and the viewer got a sense of the heat and sweat of living in that climate. One reviewer noticed:

. . . the magical direction of Rouben Mamoulian, who makes the piece a symphony of whining pipes and menacing drums and fantastic shadows arising from the mists of the rice-fields.²⁶

But typically, some reviewers picked up on the artifice of the staging,

. . . occasionally he [Mamoulian] grows a little arty, a little affected, a little tiresome, too. Whether it is his fault or not, "Congai" is too often the kind of play in which tomtoms are heard to beat insistently at highly emotional and crucial moments. The direction is a trifle florid.²⁷

Cleon Throckmorton collaborated with Mamoulian for a third time with this project and was highly praised for his contribution. There were colorful costumes, exotic instrumentation, and even burning incense pots smouldering downstage to create maximum sensory effect. Helen Mencken's performance, as Thi-Linh, also won praises, and Mamoulian was able to provide her with staging that allowed for opportunities to both shock the audiences and maximize pathetic appeal. In an early scene Mencken is locked in her lover's arms wearing a body stocking intended to simulate nudity. Sexual titillation in the form of strip-tease is present in almost every Mamoulian stage and film production and could be said to be as much a signature of his work as the use of shadow-play or cats.

Once again Mamoulian demonstrated his skill with visual composition and stylized, rhythmic movement, to call attention to his contribution to a play which was otherwise criticized as weak.

In addition to giving him the opportunity to claim credit for improving a weak play, the play contained the requisite Mamoulilian character and plot dynamics. Again we have a Camille-like central character and story--a female protagonist of the demi-monde, subjugated by hypocrisy of the dominant culture into a corrupt existence and so earning our sympathy without posing any serious political challenge to the social structure shown to be the cause of the unjust suffering. The individual struggles to overcome constraints by authorities. Rather than be vulnerable and dependent on them, she seeks to turn the tables and exploit the exploiters--to master her own destiny. One currency of power is sex. The relationships between the characters are typified not only by class, racial, and gender subjugation, but also contain the sexual politics of family, of inter-generational seduction and appeasement through sex. The sado-masochistic psychosexual dynamic of the play gives it its charge. A stasis can be achieved only through conquest of the offending authority and subsequent restoration of equilibrium through the balanced relationship with a peer.

In the typical Mamoulilian scenario this resolution would be successful. In Congai the protagonist is not successful at overcoming adversarial forces. Mamoulilian usually attempted to alter such an ending, but in this case he either could not or would not. In the end she is

forced to accept her downtrodden place in the world. To have allowed this Vietnamese woman to subvert the dominant western culture would have been too politically revolutionary an ending to the play. Mamouliau is unwittingly an accomplice in a purging of the audience's collective guilt over the plight of the victims of colonization through the pathos of the play's central character. At the same time, because the villains are French and not American, the audience can feel morally superior by pointing the finger elsewhere and ignoring their own complicity in numerous similar situations the world over. The Brechtian approach to a play like this would have challenged the audience to confront the political situation; Mamouliau's approach covered it up with perfume and sensory allure, trivializing the issues at hand; aestheticizing them.

Finally, the play also contains plot elements that could be construed to relate to the fairly recently deceased sister of Mamouliau. Svetlana Mamouliau, like Thi-Linh, was a member of an ethnically discriminated-against minority, who left her "village" life to live with an army officer who did not take care of her as he should have done, resulting in her demise. Mamouliau's mother felt she had undergone a similar experience in her own marriage, albeit with less dire consequences. Even closer to home, when we recall Mamouliau's remark, when asked about filmmaker George Stevens, that an artist's

work is always autobiographical,²⁸ Mamoulian's identification with the play may go further still. Like the philandering father whom Mamoulian took after, earning him a lifelong reputation as a Don Juan, Mamoulian may have identified with the male characters in the play whose predilections are for exotic, idealized beauty in women.

Infidelity is depicted as integral to the nature of intimacy. Rarely does Mamoulian treat bourgeois family life as subject matter. Even when he does, it is with an eye drawn to the hidden violations of outwardly conventional behavior. Sexual negotiation is the subject that interested Mamoulian most.

With Congai a hit, Mamoulian was readmitted into the fold of the Theatre Guild. On December 10, 1928, less than one month after the opening of Congai, Mamoulian directed Wings Over Europe. Although it won Mamoulian critical acclaim, it ran only thirty-three performances. Following Wings Over Europe, almost an entire year passed before he returned to the stage again to direct his only stage production of 1929, Romain Rolland's The Game of Love and Death.

One of the authors of Wings Over Europe, Maurice Browne, was an Englishman who had pioneered the "Little Theatre" movement in Chicago in the first decades of the twentieth century. Browne was an acquaintance of Langner from Langner's early years traveling across the midwest

as a patent attorney. It was Browne's work as a producer of "art" theatre that provided Langner with early inspiration to start what would eventually become the Theatre Guild. Wings Over Europe was Browne's second writing collaboration with English poet Robert Nichols. Together they had received critical acclaim for Journey's End, their play about the ravages of World War I.

Wings Over Europe was also an anti-war play, but one with a science-fiction twist. Set in then-contemporary London, the play concerns a young genius, Francis Lightfoot, who has invented an atomic bomb; a rather prescient notion for 1928. The young inventor is not only a scientific genius, but also a poet and political idealist. He is coincidentally the nephew of the Prime Minister, so he takes his invention to his uncle and proposes to share the technology with all of the nations of the world. The expected effect will be complete deterrence from waging war for fear of the consequences which we now know all too well. However, the cabinet ministers think the invention could be better used by Britain alone as a means of gaining the upper hand in the worldwide power struggle. This enrages the young genius. His ideals betrayed, he resolves to withdraw the offer of his invention and instead use it to blow up this disappointing world, starting with Britain. A scene of great silent tension ensues in which the cabinet ministers must decide how to respond to the young man's

threat. With a click of a cigarette case, the mounting tension is broken. The Secretary of War pulls out a revolver and assassinates the youth. But too late. Planes are heard flying overhead. Lightfoot's secret has leaked out to alien nations, and atomic destruction is about to start as the curtain falls.

The Theatre Guild had first offered the play to Philip Moeller to direct. He turned it down seeing little chance for success with a play about twelve men who sit around a board room talking for two hours. He was correct in his prediction. The premise of the play seemed preposterous, the format talky, static, and, most damaging to commercial success, lacking female characters and sex. Producers promoted Wings Over Europe as a play of ideas. Audiences stayed away, fearful of a boring, intellectual evening. But its intellectual pretensions won it praise from critics, and Mamoulian was unanimously praised for his contribution. He had made riveting theatre out of a static, rhetorical drama.

Mamoulian said he accepted the project because, like many other projects he did, no one else wanted to do it or saw potential for success with it. It was a challenge to his genius to make a success out of something no one else wanted to touch. His previous successes had been with stage spectacle. Taking on this play meant once again testing his ability to make use of contraction

rather than expansion as a means of achieving dramatic effect. He saw the dangers:

. . . if you have eighteen men sitting around a table talking, you're not going to get an ensemble you're going to get a bloody bore. People will go to sleep. It'd be worse than reading a play.²⁹

He determined that the way to overcome this obstacle was ". . . to scale down the whole level of physical actions so that the smallest gesture would seem a shock."³⁰

Mamoulian drew an analogy between the kind of shock through scaled-down action he was working for and the effect of going through a wax museum where through the corner of your eye you see one of the figures wink at you. Every gesture and movement had to be choreographed and timed to the metronome.

In the scene where the young scientist has given his ultimatum and the cabinet ministers barely move, in silence, for a full five minutes before announcing their decision, Mamoulian illustrated how rhythm could be used to create tension. This is the theatrical moment upon which he drew from his childhood lesson in physics the power of rhythmic movement. Critics singled out this scene for its effectiveness as well.

But most important to Mamoulian in his retelling of his work on the play, is the recollection of a challenge posed to him by one of the play's author's, Robert Nichols.

. . . we were three weeks into rehearsal when Mr. Robert Nichols arrived. . . . Then when you realize that the father³¹ of the thing has arrived and

you're going to show him a baby that is not what he had in mind, you get slightly cold feet. I said, "Oh, my God, what am I going to face now, with this man?" I took him to lunch, and I told him, "You know, Mr. Nichols, I've made some changes in your play." "Changes?" I said, "yes however," I said, 'don't lose your sang-froid. All I want you to do is to come to the rehearsal after lunch, we'll run through the play and you'll see what I've done. If you don't like it, well, you're the author. I have no rights here. We'll go back to the original." I explained the problem to him. There were three things. Number one: This scene of husteria [sic], the awkward dialogue. I do it with silence. "With silence?" I said, "look, I'm just telling you this so you won't be shocked to death. But see it first and see what you think." Secondly, I told him that to have an accident resolve your play is a bankruptcy.³² So I have him shot by the Secretary of War. He said, "Impossible! What do you mean? At Number Ten Downing Street? A Secretary of war would murder the guy?" I said, "well, what about the atom bomb and the provocation? If you think the murder is improbable, what about the atom bomb?" Well, he said, all right he'd see the rehearsal. I already thought there was trouble coming. The actors were so nervous. There he sat, and I sat a seat away from him. Then they started, finally getting to this "silent" scene. Five minutes of silence, and walking and the clock ticking--and then, the click! Well, when the thing clicked, Nichols jumped up and started yelling like a calf being slaughtered, and tearing his hair. . . and yelling, "You cannot do this! YOU CANNOT DO THIS!"³³

Mamoulian goes on to describe how this outburst upset and demoralized the cast. Nichols ordered Mamoulian to accompany him immediately to the local telegraph office in order to notify Maurice Brown of what he had witnessed in rehearsal. Alarmed, Mamoulian pleaded with Nichols to desist, offering to delete all alterations and restore the play to its original form.

Nichols, according to Mamoulian, was implacable. The story ended at the Western Union office with Nichols

handing Mamoulian the telegram he had written and ordering him to read it:

I said, "Please, spare me that." "No," he said. "I insist that you read it." So he handed me the cable. I'll give you the first line, which, of course, I'll never forget: "Rouben Mamoulian is a genius."³⁴

The protagonist, like Mamoulian, is a young genius, whose genius gives him the power to destroy the older male authority figures, just as Mamoulian had to confront the "father" of the play and gain his capitulation. The young genius is an idealist, a poet, intent on using his talents to save the world where the politicians have failed to do so. "Politics has failed, economics has failed, religion has failed. Our only hope is with the arts."³⁵ Lightfoot, the young genius and poet believes in science for life's sake, like Mamoulian does in "art for life's sake." Unlike the cuts made in O'Neill's play where we have some documentation of the author's true feelings about cuts made to his play, in the case of Nichols, no such record could be found. What is clear from critical accounts is that, once again, Mamoulian was successful because of his showman's instincts and understanding. He was able to conjure up theatrical effect to offset what he perceived as weakness in the drama.

Chapter 5: APPLAUSE AND FILMMAKING

Two days before Rouben Mamoulian's thirtieth birthday, and four days before the October 10, 1927, opening of Porgy, Warner Brothers premiered The Jazz Singer. The era of talking pictures had begun. Most film companies responded swiftly to the new technology making sizable financial investments in converting production and exhibition facilities to sound capability. The instant market for talking pictures created an urgent need not only to equip the industry technically for sound, but also to provide the dramatic material it would need to talk: dialogue scripts and the actors to speak them. And since most silent film directors were thought ill equipped to bring a dramatic text to life, dialogue coaches were hired to work with the actors.

The film companies turned to the theatre, to Broadway, to supply them with the necessary properties and personnel to make the transition from silent to sound films. Mamoulian was fortunate to have emerged as a successful stage director on Broadway at this transitional moment in film history. The chaos of the transition made possible opportunities that would not occur just a few years later once a new stasis had been reached.

Mamoulian claims to have received, and turned down, many offers from film companies to come to Hollywood and work in film.¹ It was only when Jesse Lasky and Walter Wanger of Paramount Pictures courted him that he expressed any interest. Mamoulian never specified what the other offers were, and it is questionable whether there were any serious offers other than Paramount's. The one from Paramount was to work not as a director, but as a dialogue coach.

It is no accident that Mamoulian found his entrée into film at Paramount. Of all the major studios, Paramount Pictures, had a reputation and artistic aspirations, within the film industry, similar to those of the Theatre Guild and its goals on Broadway. Paramount had artistic and intellectual pretensions that the other studios lacked. Paramount wished to legitimize its product in the eyes of the cultured elite by engaging the talent that would create the desired product. Neal Gabler, in his book, An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood, describes the Paramount mystique:

"We were always trying to lift public taste a little bit," admitted Walter Wanger, a Paramount executive by way of Dartmouth and Oxford. "Zukor² and Lasky were dedicated men who would produce pictures that they thought should be done, even though they weren't going to be profitable."³

Mamoulian was often compared to another Paramount director, Ernst Lubitsch:

. . . whose sly, stylish comedies contrasted so vividly with [Frank] Capra's open, homespun films. Paramount pictures were decidedly nonegalitarian.

They didn't ennoble the audience; they whisked them away to a world of sheen and sex where people spoke in innuendo, acted with abandon, and doubted the rewards of virtue. Paramount's was a universe of Marlene Dietrich's smoky come-ons, of Chevalier's eyebrows arched in the boulevardier's worldliness, of Mae West's double entendres sliding out the corner of her mouth, of Gary Cooper's aestheticized handsomeness, and of the Marx Brothers' leveling chaos. Though Cary Grant later left for independence, he began there--his stylishness and savoir-faire the quintessence of the studio Zukor built The studio of glossy sophistication was also the studio of grand patriotic spectacles like Old Ironsides and The Covered Wagon, which treated American history with the textbook reverence that Zukor felt toward his adopted country. The studio with visualist sensualists like Von Sternberg and Cecil B. DeMille, their cameras languid and caressing, also made the most popular of the biblical spectacles. . . . What Lubitsch, Von Sternberg, DeMille, Dietrich, Grant, Mae West, and many of the others on the studio's roster all shared was the ability to combine sophistication with a certain hard-edged realism--the gentleman with the con artist, the civil with the steely, the genteel with the tough. . . . At Paramount, at least, one didn't have to choose between soft, idle respectability and realpolitik. . . . one could always have both.⁴

Mamoulian had his longest and artistically most successful tenure at Paramount Pictures. His films for Paramount fit neatly into the Paramount mystique as Gabler describes it; Applause (1929), City Streets (1931), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1931), Love Me Tonight (1932), and Song of Songs (1933). He returned to Paramount for one more film in 1937, High Wide and Handsome. The Mamoulian style and sophistication appealed to the aspirations of the Paramount studio bosses. Walter Wanger was an intellectual in an industry that rarely suffered intellectuals. Wanger's presence in Mamoulian's film career, and he in Wanger's, had a destiny about it,

each framing the other's career at either end. Wanger had once been Lawrence Langner's business manager for the Theatre Guild. In the late twenties, Langner was in contact with Wanger to work out deals for joint ventures between Paramount and the Guild. The Guild's company of actors was already starting to lose many of its members to the lure of film fame and fortune. The Guild would soon lose Henry Travers, Dudley Digges, and Claude Rains, to mention a few. It seems quite likely that Langner was the connection leading to Wanger's offer to Mamoulian to work for Paramount in Astoria. Wanger brought Mamoulian into the film business with Mamoulian's first film Applause. Ultimately Wanger was also the one to usher him out as the producer of the 1963 film Cleopatra, Mamoulian's final film project from which he officially resigned. In between, Wanger would also be the producer to separate Mamoulian from Paramount, contracting him for M. G. M. to direct Greta Garbo in Queen Christina.⁵

Mamoulian remembered Jesse Lasky who, along with Wanger, gave him his break at Paramount:

The greatest aspect of Jesse Lasky was his tremendous enthusiasm. . . the ease with which he liked stories and new people, and the enthusiasm he brought to it. He had an enormous quality of appreciating whatever he saw. I don't believe I ever put on a play that he had seen, or made a film, without getting a long wire from Jesse. You could always count on it. . . . I think that was his most valid contribution [at Paramount]--he was afire with enthusiasm for a great many projects and with appreciation for a lot of talented people. . . . that is quite a virtue. He had this more than some of the other pioneers because he was an idealist, and when he saw something beautiful, he gave you a

tremendous reaction to it.⁶

The quote may be more revealing of Mamoulian than descriptive of Lasky. Once again, Mamoulian's assessment of a colleague's contribution is expressed in terms of the other's homage to him, Mamoulian.

Lasky was largely responsible for creating the stamp of sophistication of Paramount Pictures in the late nineteen twenties and early thirties. He headed the Hollywood studio; Zukor, New York's Astoria studios. Paramount was the last of the major film studios to maintain production facilities in New York in the late nineteen-twenties. It was at the Astoria studios that Mamoulian first went to work. When sound technology emerged in the film industry, Paramount had the advantage over other studios in being able to draw upon New York theatre talent. Many performers had little inclination to move to Hollywood, and film work for many artists was looked down upon. In Astoria, they would work at the film studio in the day while continuing to work in the theatre at night. Helen Morgan, who had the starring role in Applause, performed eight times a week in Showboat on Broadway while filming at the Astoria studio during the day. Almost all of the performers who worked on Applause were working in film for the first time.

Mamoulian recalled how he came to work for Paramount:

I was lucky to have done a series of very successful shows on Broadway. So Paramount came to

me--sound had just come in. They wanted me to sign a seven-year contract. First, I was to help a silent screen director by directing the dialogue for him for a couple of years. Then, if the studio felt that I had learned the business, they would let me direct a film. Well, you see, I was in a lucky position. I didn't need films. I was going strong on Broadway. I laughed at the whole thing. I said, "Look, I'll tell you exactly what I would like to do. I'd like to do only one film. No seven years. No options."

They said, "You're dead for films because we never sign a contract without options."

It's one of my few original achievements--I have never signed an option in my life. I said, "No options. And there's only one way we can do it. Let me go to the studio. Allow me to be on the set, to watch the shooting, the projection of the rushes, the cutting, and so on. And when I come to you and tell you I am ready to direct, that's when I do a film."

I guess they wanted me enough to say finally, "Well, we're dealing with a crazy man, but let's do it." So we signed this contract and I went to Astoria Studio.

There is no great mystery to the mechanics of motion picture making, I think you can familiarize yourself with all of it in five weeks. I was asking George Folsey, the great cameraman, about lenses, to tell me what a "thirty-five" does, or a "forty," or a "four-inch," silly questions in the cutting room and so on. After five weeks I went into Mr. Lasky and Mr. Zukor and I said, "I'm ready."

They said, "Ready for what?"

I said, "I'm ready to direct a film." They laughed at me. I said, "Look at the contract. What does it say? When I tell you I'm ready, I'm ready."⁷

Unfortunately, there is no account on record of Mamoulian's hiring from Lasky or Zukor. Whatever made them do it, Mamoulian was, in fact, able to claim as one of his achievements that he never signed a contract with options--a rare arrangement for the time. This anecdote signals the continuation of Mamoulian's struggle with authority for autonomy, and the beginning of what would become an increasingly losing power struggle with film executives.

The film studios felt they needed dialogue coaches from the theatre to make their films talk. But in enlisting Mamoulian for this purpose, they had come to the wrong theatre man. Of all his gifts as a director, Mamoulian's weakest was probably his ability to assist actors in realizing the potential of language. He often stated his preference for reducing dialogue to the minimum. In the theatre he had had more than his fill of dialogue and was interested in film precisely because it was an artistic medium where language was not the primary means of encoding messages. He was a pictorialist. Sounds and their rhythmic, musical qualities, plus the psychological impact of background soundtracking interested him more than the cognitive impact of the text. His strengths lent themselves to the cinematic. In hiring Mamoulian as a dialogue coach, the film studios would undoubtedly have gotten unimpressive results, and he might never have been given the opportunity to direct. And although Mamoulian was never one to acknowledge weaknesses in his abilities as a director, he was aware of his strengths and pointed them out repeatedly. However he did it, he did well for himself to insist on starting out right away as a director and not as a dialogue coach.

The technology of film enabled Mamoulian to create the kind of rhythmic stylization through montage that he had been striving for on stage. Freed of the stage's physical limitations, he could fulfill his artistic

vision, could have a control over the product he could not have in the theatre. The film director, much more than the stage director, shapes what is transmitted to the audience whereas the theatre director must finally entrust his work to the actors.

With this control comes power--artistic power, political power, and economic power. The power of film to influence masses of people and the enormous financial rewards from the film industry were not lost on Mamoulian; just as the power of Broadway was not lost on the ambitious young teacher in Rochester. Mamoulian was always the author of his own life, and the transition to film, like every stage of his career, was surely brought about through careful calculation as much as through the serendipity Mamoulian would have history believe. When he wanted something he was not one to leave it to chance and he may have been more instrumental in orchestrating an invitation from Paramount than he let on.

During those five weeks of roaming around the studio asking questions, Mamoulian recalled watching Herbert Brenon direct Cinderella and Jean de Limur direct Jealousy with Jeanne Eagles. Once Mamoulian declared his intention to direct and pressed Zukor and Lasky to honor their contractual agreement, he underwent a script selection process. He read many and was by no means won over by the script that he finally consented to direct. His first choice was a "dog picture."⁸ Once he settled on

Applause, he spent time in burlesque houses researching for the film and almost quit the project because he found the environment so dismal and shoddy. It violated what he felt should be the subject of art, which was not the worst in man, but man's capacity to overcome depressing reality and triumph spiritually. Curiously, for someone so adverse to dealing with depressing subject matter, he chose a great deal of it to direct over the span of his career. And although his expressed belief in "art for life's sake" meant, to him, always giving hope, always showing man's capacity to ennoble himself in spite of his surroundings, Applause, more than any subsequent film of his succeeds in facing that dismal reality. The qualities of realism for which he won much praise in Porgy would, in Applause, also make for a critically auspicious directorial debut. Although Mamoulian would never admit it, Applause owes much to the German Expressionist films that played occasionally on the bills alongside the opera excerpts and divertimenti he directed in Rochester.

This film, unlike any other he was to make, is striking in its expressionistic style.⁹ To a great extent, Mamoulian's place in film history rests on the technical innovations he introduced in Applause. Much of this innovation was nothing more than the accomplishment of a stated intention to merely restore the artistic sophistication in the use of montage, which had been achieved by the late twenties in silent films, to the

sound film where it had been lost in the brief period since its emergence.

Tom Milne's 1969 book on Mamoulian remains the only published volume on Mamoulian.¹⁰ In it Milne describes the striking expressionistic opening sequence of Applause:

A close-up of a shuttered store-front, the sign reading "Zenith Feed Grain Supply Co." The camera tracks back, cuts to a forlornly empty street with newspapers blown about by the wind, among them a theatreposter advertising "KITTY DARLING, QUEEN OF HEARTS". A small dog running on to worry the poster is rescued by a little girl just as the sound of a brass band swells up on the soundtrack, and we cut to Kitty Darling herself (Helen Morgan), making her triumphal progress through the crowded streets in an open carriage. The music changes to ragtime, the camera cuts inside a burlesque theatre, and tracks steadily left past the musicians in the orchestra pit; pans up, and tracks right along a row of fat, lackadaisically kicking legs; pans up further, and returns along the raddled faces of the row of weary, bumping and grinding chorus girls.¹¹

The opening sequence of Applause carried into film Mamoulian's showman instincts of providing a rhythmically propelling opening sequence that would engage the audience immediately, usually making use of technically innovative stylistic devices. In Hollywood, films must follow the convention of providing some kind of striking opening ten minutes, or what is called the "premise" of the film, as a means of engaging the audience from the start. Producers insist on a film having an engaging "premise," or the film will not sell. One of Mamoulian's great strengths was his imaginative use of this opening sequence in any play or film. He also strove to provide

what in film are called "set-pieces," or what Mamoulian termed "magic moments."¹² These, like the opening sequences, are striking moments that might involve a performer being given a scene for great bravura display, often a "star-making" moment, or some impressive pictorialization or coup de théâtre. Mamoulian sought to create at least one such memorable moment in each piece he directed. "Set-pieces" are also part of the requisite formula elements in Hollywood films. Mamoulian was not operating under the dictates of Hollywood convention. Rather, it was his own instinctual sense for creating theatrical effect and an understanding of the rhythms behind it that enabled him to provide a product that was so satisfying to producers. His work further reinforced the standardization of such devices in film.

From a purely technical standpoint, Mamoulian's first film, Applause, was his most innovative. The story of how these innovations came about is part of the standard Mamoulian repertory and has appeared in lectures and in print many times. Once again, the telling of the story is as revealing of the man and the theme of conflict with authority with the ultimate triumph of his genius, as it is descriptive of the innovations themselves:

When I started. . . I had a first- rate cameraman with me on my first film "Applause." His name was George Folsey. . . . I said to him, "I want black shadows", and he said to me, "You can't have them, because Mr. Zukor and Mr. Lasky like to

see everything on the screen. They feel that if you pay for the actors, you've got to see them all!" . . . Also I wanted in one case to show the whole scene in one shot. . . . they would put three cameras on simultaneously, and those cameras. . . had to be enclosed in a big bungalow in which you actually could suffocate. They would shoot two closeups, one long-shot, and intercut them--and the result was a talkie! . . . I wanted to shoot the scene in one shot by tracking forward and backward into closeup, medium shot, long shot. But then you'd have to handle this enormous pyramid--it took eleven men! And then the director, the cameraman, the assistant, and what not had to be inside the camera booth during the shot, and after two minutes everyone began to suffocate. . . . So Folsey said, "That's impossible, you can't do it!"¹³

Mamouljian continued describing how he wanted:

. . . a young girl (who had come out of a convent) to be whispering her prayer, and Helen Morgan, her mother (a burlesque queen) to be singing a burlesque song. Well, naturally, with one microphone you could hear the song, but you couldn't hear the whispered prayer. So I told the soundman, "Well, why don't we have a microphone under the pillow for the whisper of the girl, and another for the song of Helen Morgan, and then use two channels, record it on two strips of film, and then put them together and balance it so that you hear both, the whisper and the singing." The soundman said, "Impossible, we've never done it, it's going to be a mess."¹⁴

Finally, Mamouljian wanted the Helen Morgan character to look bedraggled. Instead the wardrobe man brought her on the set looking glamorous, as was the custom for all star performers, regardless of the character's circumstances. Denied all cooperation from his crew, he abandoned rehearsal, proceeded immediately to Zukor's office, interrupted a meeting and said:

"Now look, I have a contract to direct this film, and nobody does what I want them to do." They said, "Why won't they do it?" I said, "I don't know, they think it's impossible." So they said, "Well, maybe it is." I said, "I don't think it is." So they

said, "What exactly is the trouble?" I said, "Call everybody up here, I want to speak in front of them." So up came Folsey, the soundman, and the wardrobe man. I said, "Well, Folsey says this, and the soundman says this, but I want this! I want to relieve them of all responsibility, and if I am wrong, then I am at fault and you can fire me. But they've got to do it my way first!"¹⁵

According to Mamoulian, Zukor and Lasky agreed to let him have his way. Mamoulian's proposals worked and film history was made. Mamoulian tells how upon arrival at the studio the next day the doorman, who had always treated him with disdain, treated him with great respect, bowing to him. He also treated himself to a vindictive prank stating that his next innovation would be a shot from six feet beneath the studio floor upwards, necessitating hiring jackhammers to cut through the concrete foundation of the studio. At the moment of groundbreaking, Mamoulian stopped the workmen, warning the crew that this was to be a lesson to them lest they doubt who is in charge. He won full cooperation from then on.

Mamoulian was determined to call as much attention as possible to himself and his achievement by granting numerous interviews with the press and relating the story of his power struggle and conquest. This particular anecdote also illustrates how he employed a tactic to impress people with his genius that he used in Rochester--that of staging the most climactic moment in a piece first.

"Gee, he's got his nerve," exclaimed one of

the camera boys, "starting a picture with a scene like that. There's not another director in the business that would begin a picture with such an important scene."¹⁶

The studio bosses liked what they saw and brought the footage shot that day, Mamoulian says, to a distributors' convention in Kansas City.

A press release on Applause read:

"The New Show World" is the phrase coined by Paramount to describe the entirely new type of screen entertainment which it is developing to meet the demands of all-talking pictures, and these changing times.

"Applause" is the first complete realization of what that phrase "The New Show World"--means in terms of entertainment value.

New personalities, new treatment, new technique, startling departures from old film traditions --all of these elements of a new era in motion picture-making are combined in this elemental love story.¹⁷

and later--

To New York theatre-goers, the name of Rouben Mamoulian in connection with a stage production is a guarantee of splendid and unusual entertainment. In the future, it will have the same significance to motion picture patrons. . . . Bringing to his first screen directorial effort the wealth of originality, imagination and technical dramatic knowledge which is his, he developed a motion picture technique of his own which differs radically from the accepted forms of film story telling. Appreciating the increased mobility of the camera which sound and dialogue have imparted to the camera, Mamoulian tells the story of "Applause" by constant movement of the photographic recording instrument. Approximately eighty-five percent of the scenes in the picture are photographed in motion and the director has achieved a smoothness of action and an accentuation of dramatic values by this method never attained before.¹⁸

Mamoulian made use of a number of other innovative technical devices in the film including the use of split screen and wipes. He was the first to use outdoor

location shooting, even though at the time it was against New York City law. He filmed at Penn Station, on the subway, atop the Woolworth building, and the Brooklyn Bridge. A stylized realism was created through sight and sound. Traffic noises were heard on the soundtrack. Settings as well as costumes were deglamorized. Most of all, Mamoulian restored movement to the sound film. The camera moved continually.

Applause is the story of Kitty Darling, a star burlesque performer, whom we see slide from the heights of this seedy world to the depths of despair, and ultimately, to suicide. The melodrama is set in motion when Kitty gives birth backstage to a daughter. After several years of raising her child amongst strippers, bootleggers, gamblers, and others on the fringes of society, Kitty, even though she harbors no shame about her lifestyle, decides on the advice of her lover, that her daughter should be raised in a more conventional setting. She sends her to a convent school in the country. Kitty works and sacrifices to keep up the payments for her daughter's schooling. But she ages quickly, and her career declines leaving her without money and bleak future prospects. Her daughter, April, now grown, returns to New York to learn the truth about her mother's lifestyle, the details of which Kitty has kept secret all these years. Kitty has no intention of dragging her daughter into the burlesque world. She hopes

her daughter will get married and live a different kind of life than hers. April meets a young sailor and the two fall in love. She decides to get married and just as she is about to depart with her mother's blessing, April overhears Kitty's lover/manager tell Kitty that her career is over and that without April to take over for her, he will abandon her.

In an act of self-sacrifice, April decides that her love for her mother and sense of obligation to Kitty for all of her years of sacrifice to put her through school are more important than her own happiness. She breaks up with her sailor and goes on stage in her mother's place. Kitty, in turn, refuses to allow her daughter to throw away her chance for happiness, and swallows poison. Kitty dies and April returns to her lover.

The story contains many familiar elements. The setting is a demi-monde, with a cast of characters who live outside bourgeois convention. Kitty feels no shame living a life of freedom, sexual and otherwise. She is a Camille figure who must ultimately sacrifice herself for a lover who must live by bourgeois standards of a good life; in this case, her daughter. Kitty, the mother who lives a double life--one in the sinful world of the theatre; another, a front for her child who lives sequestered in the world of respectability--mirror Mamoulian's own mother and the sister who ran off with a young soldier. The convent mother superior acts as a

double to Kitty; the good mother, and the bad mother in the eyes of society. Virginia Mamoulian was both the upright society matron--the mother superior--and the passionate unrespectable actress mother. April leaves her mother superior to find love, much as Sister Beatrice did and Svetlana did. Both end up beatified by Mamoulian.

The power of love is both life-affirming and life-destroying. While the villain is the hypocritical world which refuses to allow people to live as they choose, where love is not enough; this world is never seriously questioned or undermined. Attention is diverted to the melodramatic self-sacrifice of the heroine. Once again, pathos is substituted for corrective action.

The film's expressionistic and unusually realistic depiction of a dark side of urban life made the film both critically acclaimed and objectionable to the censors. Mamoulian's first experience with film was also an introduction to what would become a career-long battle with the censors who felt Mamoulian was too free of moral judgment in depicting this world.

The censors were not government representatives, and their judgment did not carry with it any legal restraint. These censors were an organization called the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. The organization, as the name indicates, was made up of representatives of the producing and distributing portions of the film industry. Its purpose was to make

films distributed in the United States and abroad free of any material found objectionable to local audiences thus ensuring maximum sale of the product. The organization became known by the name of its first President, Will H. Hays, as the Hays Office. Likewise, it was later known by the name of Hays' successor Joseph Breen, as the Breen Office.

All of the major film studios belonged to the MPPDA, and any which did not would find it impossible to get its films distributed. The MPPDA involved itself in insuring the acceptability of every film to be released from the first draft of the working script to the final edit of the finished product. Each picture had to earn the MPPDA seal of approval  and display it in its credits or face a twenty-five-thousand dollar fine as penalty for violating the production code recommendations.

Initially, the MPPDA was formed to overcome distributors' difficulties that had begun to mount by the late 1920's, as Hollywood acquired a reputation as an immoral place, owing to a series of scandalous criminal and otherwise lascivious incidents. Many self-proclaimed decency organizations insisted that films were corrupting the moral fabric of the nation, acquiring a notoriety that hurt distribution. The self-proclaimed guardians of decency threatened motion picture producers: either clean up the movie industry or face boycotts and other measures

intended to hurt sales. The producers wanted their profits and their respectability restored.

The recommendations of the MPPDA differed for each film, depending on the targeted market. What might be deemed necessary to delete from a print to be shown in Kansas would be left intact for a print destined for exhibition in New York. Each market had its own predilections. Initially, the purpose of the MPPDA was not to set moral standards for the nation, but simply to market a product to its maximum profitability, while assuring the market of its responsibility as a mass medium to uphold the integrity of the shared values of the nation, and, in turn, to insure a stable, market for its product.

MPPDA processed complaints against each film during its test-marketing in order to avoid loss of revenue from criticism or even boycotting of particular motion pictures. Ultimately, the impact of the MPPDA was to impose normative values on society through control of the largest mass medium of that time.

Representatives of the Catholic church were a frequently interested party in the proceedings of the MPPDA. They objected to references made in Applause to Catholics, fearing that the scenes in the convent would lead to anti-Catholic feelings. They requested that the reference be removed or changed to another denomination.¹⁹ They also objected to the use of nudity

in the film--an objection that would resurface in almost every Mamoulian film with his predilection for striptease. Stripping is a feature in almost every Mamoulian film. Sex unlocks the door to love which, in turn, leads to spiritual transcendence. Sex is never depicted as shameful in Mamoulian's films. On the contrary, Mamoulian delights in it. His films and stage productions are sexually charged. But, typically, sex becomes aestheticized. Since Applause takes place in a burlesque theatre, it was difficult not to suggest nudity.

One of Mamoulian's favorite anecdotes illustrates his taste for the risqué. It is about a traveling salesman from Kansas City,

. . . who has been dying to go abroad for some time. And he's been working very hard and finally he's made enough money. So all his friends came to see him off. He went to Paris and came back three weeks later. His friends took him to supper. They sat around him and told him to tell us about Paris. And the salesman says, "it was wonderful. You know, it was just wonderful. You know, I was sitting there on the boulevard in a cafe. The orchestra was playing a waltz and there was a moon in the sky--wonderful people walking around. It was just wonderful, like a dream." He said, "nothing like that exists in Kansas City. I sat there and was having a brandy, and over there at the table sat a beautiful woman with a veil over her face and a brandy. And a waltz was playing. And she smiled at me. It was magic. Nothing like that in Kansas City." So finally he says, "I got enough courage, so I took my brandy and said, 'may I sit here with you?' And she says 'Yes.' So we had a toast to each other. She said, 'would you mind taking me home? I have a car here. I'll drop you where you want to go.' " So he said, "I got into this beautiful limousine. She got in and I got in, and she said, 'Why don't you come to my house and we'll have a nightcap? The driver will take you home.' So we stopped at the beautiful maisonette. We went up to the living room. Beautiful furniture, the

ice-bucket with a bottle of champagne in it. Then she walked in." He says, "I thought I was dreaming. Nothing like that ever happens in Kansas City. So then she says to me, 'have a little champagne, I'll go put something more comfortable on.' So she went off and she came back in a diaphonous negligee." And he says, "she looked so beautiful, I thought I was dreaming. Nothing like this ever happens in Kansas City." So finally she took him by the hand and she said, "come with me." She opened this door and there was this beautiful bedroom. And he stops. His friend said, "What happened?" "Well," he said, "after that, it was just like Kansas City."²⁰

This story conveys the playful, unabashed sexuality which characterizes Mamoulian's work. It also conveys his penchant for romanticism, titillation, and aestheticization of sex. More than anything, Mamoulian's work is about sex; the negotiation of sex, and the politics of sex. The chase interested him and took precedence over the consummation of sex, just as in the Kansas City story. Mamoulian's rakishness comes through in his work as a delight with teasing. He never takes an apologetic stance over sex and fought the censors over it repeatedly. He had no intention of challenging society's sexual morés, but rather of confirming accepted values by showing how sex can be a vehicle to higher, spiritual love.

The MPPDA objected to the use of profanity and other offensive language in the film, especially the word "damn." Other violations included, "dirty double crossin' broads," "everybody in the whole damn house," "too damn high hat," and "some God-forsaken farm."²¹

The MPPDA file on Applause contains a letter to Hays from a doctor expressing concern that the film would set an example to others in a situation similar to the one Kitty finds herself in, offering suicide as the solution. The objection is of a type that one still hears today with regard to the impact of television and movies, particularly in the depiction of sex, violence, and drug use, on audiences, and points to the powerful social and political impact of the mass media on the creation and dissemination of prejudices and acceptable modes of conduct. Films are recognized as powerful tools of social control:

My dear Mr. Hays:

I wish to call your attention to the following criticism and psychological study which I made after seeing the picture entitled "Applause" last night.

Toward the end of this otherwise splendid picture either the director or the author believed that the suicide of the "washed-out" blonde burlesque actress and mother was necessary to round out the story into a proper climax and as a solution for the domestic problem developed.

Psychologically analyzed this tragedy creates the impression that it was introduced for dramatic effect. It leaves a somber recollection with the spectator tincturing his entire memory and casting a melancholy aspect upon the entire picture and upon life, which pessimism is sinister and undesirable at least from the viewpoint of entertainment. The motives that lead to the taking of poison may react disastrously upon morbid or depressed individuals of unstable or emotional mentalities. It awakens in minds that are confronted with similar or other problems the possibility of escaping responsibility through this method and medium.

It may be essential to depict a suicide as part of a narrative or plot but when that is necessary it should be accomplished without painstaking or striking effectiveness. The dramatic presentation of the taking of poison to all of the horror and yet painless fatal termination may become a very dangerous suggestion, especially when it takes such an

important position in a picture and is so strongly stressed. Had this woman been an adventuress or a virago the mental reaction would not be so intense, yet here was a woman of kindly motherly instincts faced with advancing age and inability to further compete in her profession, a portrayal of thousands of men and women and for that reason the deeper feelings and emotional response is more intensive.

Respectfully submitted,
Carleton Simon (sgd) 22

One might argue the seriousness of the threat posed to audiences by the film, but the impact of the concern was not lost on Mamoulian, and surely contributed to his developing notion of "art for life's sake." Such criticisms created a conflict for Mamoulian. On the one hand, he respected them and felt all the more powerful and important for having such influence. On the other hand, interference was as objectionable as any other threat to his supremacy as director and violated his right to control an aesthetic realm. He wanted to keep reality outside his art and concentrate on creating beauty through effective entertainment. He accepted the power of his medium but balked when reminded of a responsibility to observe traditional beliefs if they jeopardized his showmanship.

Critics loved the film and hailed it as true art--an advance in the medium. But audiences stayed away, finding the subject matter and style depressing. The film captured the dark underside of the frenzy of 1929 and prefigured the steep decline that followed. Dr. Simon may

have expressed not altogether unfounded worry for viewers who could relate to the example of Kitty Darling.

An unsigned letter to Walter Wanger, dated 18 September 1929, exactly one month before the stock market crash, reads:

The direction, photography and general production values seem to us to be examples of a new forward step in picture-building, which I am sure, will greatly please the regular motion-picture patrons and which should attract to the theatre new and more critical patrons who are not in the habit of patronizing the usual motion pictures.²³

This was Paramount's hope with Mamoulian, that his sophistication would result in a product that would lend prestige to the studio and bring into the cinemas a new, more cultured audience, which had previously disdained American films. To this end, they were not as successful as early indications would let them believe. And this innovative new director would wait almost a year before being called back to Paramount's executive office with another offer.

True to his threat to return to the theatre if films did not work out on his own terms, he returned to the stage, but with great anticipation for another chance at the movies.

In the fall of 1929, Mamoulian returned to the Theatre Guild to direct the second production of their 1929-30 season. The Game of Love and Death was the latest installment in a cycle of plays by French playwright-novelist Romain Rolland on the subject of the French

Revolution, each one treating a different aspect of the drama of the Revolution from the public to the private.

The Game of Love and Death is a romantic melodrama intended to show an intimate aspect of the Revolution.

The story focusses on the characters Jerome de Courvoisier, his wife Sophie, and her lover Claude Vallee. Based on actual incidents, the plot starts after the death of Danton:

The husband, a Girondist, protects and gives sanctuary to the lover, whom the radicals are pursuing. When he realizes the extent of his wife's love for the other man, he turns over to him the passports he has obtained, so that the pair can flee. But his wife, in turn, refuses to depart; she and her husband assist the lover to the best of their meager abilities in his desperate efforts to save his neck, and then sit down calmly to face a death that will be delayed no longer than the ultimate curtain.²⁴

The husband in the play is much older than his wife, and her young lover is a passionate, political idealist who detests the violence and ugliness of the Revolution. He is a lover, a romantic. Clearly, we have all the makings of a Mamoulian drama: the romantic triangle, the passionate young hero who wants to escape the distasteful political reality. He is not interested in revolutions, only desiring to flee and live for love.

This play, unlike the others in the Rolland series on the Revolution, is distanced from its external social and political context. The play examines how political pressures affect the individuals on a personal level,

rather than depicting the public, social character of a historical event.

In The Game of Love and Death the pressures of the Revolution bring out the best in some people and the worst in others. This is precisely what Mamoulian found to make compelling drama: how some people succumb to oppressive social conditions; but heroic impulses can enable the individual to transcend the temporal reality.

The title suggests the politics of the external context as well as the politics of intimacy; the sexual politics in the play. Again, eros is the engine propelling the drama, which yields ultimately to a higher, more transcendent love.

The Theatre Guild had originally planned to open the play in its 1928-29 season, but cancelled after a dress rehearsal because the presentation was artistically unacceptable. Mamoulian may have seen an opportunity to succeed at something no one else could, but when he opened the play on November 25, 1929, it ran for only forty-eight performances and received mostly negative reviews. Most critical discussion centered on the difficulties with the writing. Many critics blamed the rhetorical nature of the play. Others felt Rolland had fallen back on the kind of bourgeois melodramatic conventions that his other plays had so successfully and deliberately abandoned. For all its intention to advance

an intellectually provocative and activist theatre, it rested on a conventional romantic melodrama.

Most critics remarked how stimulated they were in reading the play and wondered how its stage realization could have fallen so short. Mamouliau received much of the blame for not rendering the content of the play more lively. Some found the director remiss in not demanding more depth and interest in the rhetorical passages while simultaneously condemning dramatically heightened moments for yielding to easy bombast and histrionics. Alice Brady, who would soon win critical accolades for her performance in O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra, shocked the critics who had come to expect much more from her. Mamouliau was partly to blame. His solution to overcoming the length of the set speeches was to stylize the production with distracting theatrical effects; working around the script rather than getting inside of it.

The play was likened to grand opera by many reviewers for its tedious and pretentious succession of arias, duets, and ensembles; its political intrigue coupled with romance in the tradition of Fidelio, Andrea Chenier, and the plays of Schiller. One reviewer remarked:

. . . a piece which has to rely for its most effective moments on the stunning manipulations of shadow-graphs and movietone tricks which Mr. Mamouliau, a director unafraid to borrow from both opera and films, has added.²⁵

Mamoulian tried to bring the drama to life through his repertoire of showman's techniques, when the piece needed more inspired guidance of the actors. Mamoulian agreed that the play was not successful, but accepted none of the blame for this. He recollected the production without introspection as to where he may have gone wrong. Rather, he pointed to the set and lighting effects that he found effective and the performance by Claude Rains in a scene that almost all the critics agreed was the one riveting moment in an otherwise slow evening. In his defense Mamoulian stated:

I think it's a very literate, civilized play, psychologically very interesting, and. . . a challenge because it has a tremendous amount of dialogue. It's very French. I remember that Frank Conroy had a speech that ran for five or six pages. We don't have that in American plays, but that's no reason not to have it. . . . I liked it and I did it with much love.²⁶

The Theatre Guild decided to revive its 1922 production of Karel Čapek's R.U.R. for a one-week engagement at the Martin Beck Theatre beginning February 17, 1930. Mamoulian directed and Lee Simonson designed the sets. This time Mamoulian was in charge of lighting from the outset. The original production had been very successful and Mamoulian received good reviews for his work which was contrasted with the earlier production as being lighter, more playful and satirical than the original. Critics who had seen the earlier production as well liked both approaches; the earlier treatment being effective in capturing the dark vision of the play, the

latter in providing a more entertaining experience in the theatre.

R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots,) like Wings Over Europe, is a work of science fiction, where robots rebel against their human creators and take over the world. Situated "on a remote island," Rossum's Universal Robot factory is doing a booming business with orders multiplying from all over the world. The only humans on the island are the six middle-aged men who run the industry.

At the opening of the play Helena arrives, a young Englishwoman, a sort of Major Barbara heroine, who has come to liberate the robots from their enslavement and inhuman treatment. Her brief visit becomes a five-year stay serving as a sort of Snow White to the six men. Her good intentions on behalf of the robots backfires when it leads to their organizing a worldwide proletarian rebellion and eventual destruction of all human life. Without human beings to continue their manufacture, the robots panic to find themselves also becoming extinct. The play ends with a robot Adam and Eve rebirth in a Garden of Eden.

The play parodies the well-made play and satirizes a paranoid fantasy of automation gone mad while still seriously entertaining such a notion. It satirizes the bourgeois audience's liberal, humanist sympathies for the oppressed workers of the industrialized world while

drawing on the audience's fears of worldwide proletarian revolution, a fear very much on people's minds at the time. The play contains many other critical observations about the hypocrisies and horrors of industrialized society and an impassioned plea in favor of hard work.

While the original production brought out the darker political fears in the play, Mamoulian found his opportunities for stylized movements and visual presentation, especially with the robots. He added a coup de théâtre at the close of the third act by having the army of robots march to the edge of the stage, toward the audience, before the blackout.

Although Mamoulian created theatrical entertainment, once again the subject matter is laden with political content and allusion--which did not interest him.

The male characters are genius philosopher-scientists who work not so much for financial gain as "for life's sake," to rid mankind of the drudgery of labor. Everything is under control until Helena, the Helen of Troy-cum-Major Barbara-cum-Snow White-cum-Eve, archetypal female interrupts man's world of work and genius. The power of her allure leads these men to make imprudent decisions which lead to everyone's demise. In the end, however, female allure leads to restored hope for renewal of life. The world has been cleansed of greed and selfishness. The spiraling productivity and

consumption has been stopped. The beauty of nature has returned.

In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, two years later, Mamoulian explored the consequences of genius reacting with sexual desire. The explosive danger of creation through technical innovation's coming into contact with the danger of sexual power, yielded a cataclysm, alluring and yet dreaded, fueling much of the creative inspiration in Mamoulian's career.

Mamoulian followed R.U.R. immediately with the American premiere of Ivan Turgenev's then eighty-year old play, A Month in the Country, for the Theatre Guild. The production opened March 17, 1930, and ran a healthy seventy-two performances followed by a tour.²⁷

Mamoulian received generally favorable reviews as did the two lead actors, Alla Nazimova and Alexander Kirkland. Mamoulian convinced Mstislav Dobuzhinsky to reproduce his 1908 Moscow Art Theatre sets and costumes for the Guild production. The credits include a translation from the Russian by M. S. Mandell, but also an "acting version" by Rouben Mamoulian.

Mamoulian's history of A Month in the Country includes another anecdote about struggle and control. Oberstein describes it this way:

He had a philosophy which can be summed up as follows: either they go or I go. By "they" he means the actor who is causing the trouble. So, he says, he "went after" her [Nazimova]. She was very responsive to him at first, but that caused him to think, "this is too good to be true. She can't really be

all that cooperative." Finally he rode her to the point where she said to him, "you don't like me. You don't like what I'm doing." She felt that he didn't like her as a person. There was, apparently, a trauma about that particular incident, but it was only a tension that lasted three or four days. He later came up to her when she'd done something very fine and he said, "I loved what you did. That was beautiful," and he obviously meant it. She wept with tears of joy, grabbed his hands, kissed them (he said, "I will never forget her kissing my hands.") and from that time on, they got along beautifully.²⁸

This treatment of actors is not uncommon with directors, but with Mamoulian it might have been tinged with a sadism that bears striking resemblance to that depicted in what is truly one of the most brutal scenes in cinema, when Hyde is "riding" Ivy sadistically in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The obsessive part of Mamoulian clearly frightened him, and he returned to it again and again in retelling his history, as if to exonerate himself and say, "See, I had to do it. It was my job, and the end justified the means. They were all grateful for it in the end."

In this domestic drama we once again encounter the romantic triangle; this time between a wealthy landowner, Herr Schaaf, his younger wife Natalia Petrovna, and Aleksei Nikolaevich Bieliaev, the young tutor of their son Kolia. The play focusses on the wife rather than on the young man--a sort of nineteenth century Phaedra and Hippolytus. The production would be Mamoulian's last collaboration with the Theatre Guild for nearly six years.

Following A Month in the County, Mamoulian had a singular opportunity to return to opera. The Philadelphia Orchestra and The League of Composers under Leopold Stokowski produced a special Monday evening series to introduce new works. On April 7, 1930, they performed fully staged versions of Arnold Schoenberg's one-act opera Die Glückliche Hand (The Hand of Fate) on a bill with Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps. The bill was repeated at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York the following Monday evening, April 14, 1930. Mamoulian staged the abstract Schoenberg opera, at first not quite knowing what it meant or what to do with it. He evidently relished the prestige such a collaboration could bestow upon him.

He managed to utilize abstract movement, lighting, and color patterns to suit the musical style and received praise in the newspapers for his efforts. His former co-worker, Martha Graham, performed in the Stravinsky ballet. Robert Edmond Jones designed the sets and would later work with Mamoulian again not in theatre, but in film, on the first technicolor feature film, Becky Sharp. And Mamoulian would befriend Schoenberg years later, in Hollywood.

After a lengthy summer hiatus, Mamoulian directed a dramatization of Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms by Laurence Stallings, co-author of What Price Glory? The play was produced by A. H. Woods and opened at the

National Theatre September 22, 1930, running for only twenty-four performances. Mamoulian imported British actress Elissa Landi to play the lead part of nurse Catherine Barkley, who falls in love with an army officer during World War I. She has an illicit romance with the lieutenant, is deserted by him, and dies in childbirth bearing his illegitimate child. This play, like Sister Beatrice, ends in the beatification of the heroine upon her death.

The play was condemned as a failure in transferring a work so well realized in its original form into a drama. Mamoulian received harsh criticism for his inattention to the subtleties of the relationship between the two leading characters while concentrating, predictably, on stage spectacle and allowing the performers to overact. The play was closed down by censors during its Philadelphia tryouts because of sexually explicit language and staging. The producers made cuts which were restored to the New York production without incident. Accusations of vulgarity plagued A Farewell to Arms as it had Congai and would a number of Mamoulian's films.

By late 1930, Walter Wanger of Paramount had resumed contact with Mamoulian, tendering an offer to direct another film. Things were, once again, not going well for Mamoulian at the Theatre Guild. The Guild planned to open its 1930-31 season with Tretyakov's Roar China. Mamoulian

insisted on directing the Russian play, but the Guild had added another promising young director, Herbert Biberman, to their roster. Biberman had recently returned from the Soviet Union full of passion for the agitprop theatre of the proletariat. Langner and Helburn, as always, stood behind Mamoulian. But Mamoulian had antagonized the other board members, particularly Lee Simonson and Philip Moeller, and lost the bid to direct the play. Contrary to what Mamoulian often repeated, they didn't "all fall in love with one another."

. . . Mamoulian, after making a dignified speech [to the Guild board] about minority rights, oppressed directors and his prior claim to direct anything of Russian origin, retired gracefully to Hollywood.
 . . . 29

Mamoulian and Biberman would cross paths again years later as members of the Screen Directors Guild appearing before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, and in retaliation for Roar China, Mamoulian accepted an offer to direct a farce called Solid South about an old major in the south and the household that falls apart around him. Producer Alexander McKaig engaged Jo Mielziner to design the sets of the play by one-time playwright Lawton Campbell. The cast included Elizabeth Patterson who later appeared in Love Me Tonight, Georgette Harvey who later appeared in Porgy and Bess and Lost in the Stars, Jessie Royce Landis, the star Richard Bennett as Major Bruce Follensby, and Bette Davis in an early starring role

which led to her being hired by Warner Brothers Pictures.³⁰

Mamoulian received mostly scathing reviews for his work on this production; most critics felt he was out of his element with this material and unsuccessful at getting the actors to create the farce rhythms he wanted in speech and movement. Again, the criticism was that the direction was overdone and the actors were not controlled enough, particularly Bennett. Mamoulian remembers his struggle with Bennett this way:

So, comes the day of the first rehearsal. It's 11:00 AM in the lobby of a Broadway theatre--and there's no Richard Bennett. So I started rehearsing the other people. . . . comes lunch time, no Bennett. I thought: "My God this is really awful. The son of a bitch is pulling this star stuff." We came back after lunch to the lobby about 3:30. The lobby was down some steps and down these steps comes Bennett with that fur collar, holding a round box which looked like it contained a hat. He said, "Greetings, everybody. Greetings." I put on my stern face and I said, "Mr. Bennett, we started rehearsing at 11:00 AM. What happened to you?" "Oh, well," he said, "Mr. Mamouliyah, I went looking for the kind of hat I want to wear in this production, and I've found it. It's just right for me." And he opens the box and brings out this black hat which was all right. I said, "Well, that's very interesting, but we do have to rehearse." He said, "Mr. Mamoulyah, don't worry about it." I thought to myself, "Oh, my God, this is going to be terrible." Then I said to him, "Would you like to go through this once now?" I had the other people all placed, you see. So he went in, and I started pressing on him. At first he took it very easy, then he was puffing, and working and working. At the end of the rehearsal he was real tired but he didn't say anything. He was perfectly cooperative, to everyone's vast relief. They were all scared of him, because of his reputation. Now the second day, the same thing happened; I mean I "went after" him again, just like with Nazimova.³¹

Mamoulian continued his story, detailing further liberties Bennett took during rehearsals. Mamoulian responded by criticizing everything Bennett did in rehearsal. Finally Bennett could stand no more criticism and asked:

"You don't like it Mr. Mamoulyah?" I said, "No, I don't like it." So he went over to his chair, picked up the script, came over, threw the script on top of my table, saying, "Then get yourself another boy!" and walked off. . . . Richard Bennett was gone. But I pretended that nothing had happened, and I kept rehearsing the other people, but in the meantime I'm dying inside. Two hours later my stage manager came over to me and said, "You know, Mr. Mamoulian, Richard Bennett is standing outside in the stage alley, in the rain. He never left." So I went out into the alley and here stood Bennett, you know, wet collar, wet hat. I said, "Mr. Bennett, you're going to catch cold here. Please come in." He agreed to come in and he said, "I want to make a statement." Then I said, "All right, Mr. Bennett. Make the statement." He said, "I want the whole cast to be here." So they all came on, and he got up and he said, "I've never been directed in my life. I know what to do. But I've met a real director. Mr. Mamoulyah. And I'm going to do everything he tells me. That's my statement. And I apologize for walking off." Well, of course, I hugged him, we kissed each other. The next day he brought me a big box of cigars, and we fell in love with each other. 32

A familiar ending to a conflict which characterized his career more prominently than any other in his own words.

Solid South opened October 13, 1930, at the Lyceum Theatre, and closed after only twenty-three performances. The only person involved whose work came through unscathed was Jo Mielziner. Mamoulian had removed himself from the favor of the Theatre Guild management over Roar China, and his success beyond the auspices of the Guild

was not promising. Mamoulian had had great success but also a struggle sustaining his career on Broadway. It was time to make a break and embark on new beginnings.

Chapter 6: THE HOLLYWOOD YEARS: THE EARLY THIRTIES

Critics praised Applause and hailed Mamoulian for his technical innovations and artistry. Studio executives were impressed also. But the public was not. The film was a box-office failure. Mamoulian had broken with industry policy by insisting on a one-picture contract. Paramount, in turn, let him wait almost a year before contacting him to discuss directing another film. At the time, Mamoulian was baffled by the lack of communication, especially since his debut was critically so well received. He was equally hurt and angry at the Theatre Guild management for the debacle of Roar China. With both producing organizations, Mamoulian had insisted on appropriating jurisdiction over matters usually determined by producers. Mamoulian felt his contribution rendered him the more appropriate party to wield decision-making power. When these adversaries did not submit to him, he found himself in an intolerable situation that did not confirm the wisdom of Grandma Kate.

The offer from Alexander McKaig to direct Solid South was fortuitous in that it not only offered employment when none other was forthcoming but also

provided Mamoulian with the opportunity to snub both organizations as he felt he had been snubbed by them.

Walter Wanger had resumed contact with Mamoulian in the fall of 1930. At the time, Mamoulian was arguing with the Guild over who should direct Roar China. When Mamoulian lost his bid, he stormed out, letting the Guild know that he had received several offers from Hollywood, each on his own terms and with handsome salaries. McKaig, at this point, offered Mamoulian Solid South. Between the two offers there was no contest. But Wanger had yet to make any firm proposal. Mamoulian explained to Wanger that he had an offer pending to direct on Broadway and needed a commitment from Paramount if he were to turn down work. Wanger and Mamoulian set a predetermined hour at which Wanger would telephone Mamoulian with the concrete offer. The call did not come at the appointed hour and, snubbed yet once again, Mamoulian signed with McKaig that same day. Wanger's delay may quite possibly have been a maneuver to let Mamoulian know who was to be in charge. Wanger did call with Paramount's offer, but not until the following day. Mamoulian reminded him of the failure to call at the appointed time as reason for acceptance of the Broadway offer. Wanger felt the sting, and Mamoulian responded,

. . . I'm a man of my word. If Wanger isn't going to keep his part of the bargain, I consider myself free to accept whatever offer I choose.¹

Even McKaig saw the folly of Mamoulian's petulance and offered gladly to release him from the obligation, but Mamoulian could not afford to set such a precedent if he were to have any future dealings with Paramount. He stood his ground.

Mamoulian's work in Solid South led to no new offers to direct. For several weeks after its close it indeed appeared as if his strategy had backfired.

In the same year, mystery-writer Dashiell Hammett was under contract to Paramount. He had written a treatment, or short plot outline, for a screenplay called After School. It was about a sixteen-year-old boy and girl who go to high school, get mixed up with racketeers, and eventually escape their life of crime. B.P. Schulberg, head of production for Paramount's Hollywood studios, had Oliver H. P. Garrett and Max Marcin expand the treatment into a screenplay. By late 1930 Gary Cooper had been contracted to play the boy's role, "The Kid," and Clara Bow the girl, Nan.

Schulberg offered the film to Mamoulian, and by the end of the year, Mamoulian was on his way to California. Mamoulian recalled the train trip west accompanied by Adolph Zukor and his entourage. Zukor was an avid poker player and insisted that his co-travelers pass the time playing cards with him. Mamoulian was not a card-player, but, in this symbolic gesture of submission, was forced to acquiesce, losing a fair sum of money by time they

reached California. Mamouljian, who had been looking forward to the exotic scenery he had read about as a child, was disappointed to have to spend the entire trip with the window shades pulled down, at Zukor's insistence. When the train was crossing California's Imperial Valley, Mamouljian asked permission to raise the shade so that he could see the orange groves blooming in the winter. Zukor raised the shade, let Mamouljian have a look, and promptly closed it.

At first Mamouljian was unhappy in Hollywood. He found it desolate compared to New York. But, in time, he came to feel an affinity for the mountainous setting and for the warm, dry climate which reminded him of his native Caucasus.

By the time After School reached the screen, its title had been changed to City Streets. The juveniles were no longer high school students, just young adults. In the original Hammett story, the girl, Nan, lives with her parents in a cheaply furnished flat. She begins as a sweet girl, but after being imprisoned as an accomplice to the murder of the racketeer, Blackie, becomes hardened and cynical. "The Kid" works in a shooting gallery at an amusement park. Nan's father, Pop Cooley, enlists "the Kid" to work as a marksman for organized crime; he accepts willingly. When Nan is freed from prison, the young couple decide to leave the criminal life. But at her welcome-home party, she mockingly reveals their plan

and humiliates "the Kid" by behaving seductively with other men at the party. This infuriates "the Kid," making him walk out on the mobsters. Pop Cooley beats Nan for causing them to lose a good marksman. Seeing Nan get beaten, "The Kid" stays to prevent any further abuse. Agnes, the crime boss's ex-girlfriend, helps the young couple escape. In a final shootout, Nan and "the Kid" manage to get away. They toss their guns in the river and go to the country to live happily ever after.

The original story reads much more like a slice-of-life than the high melodrama of the final script. In the film City Streets, there is a great deal of discussion about values, about doing what is right. Nan undergoes a reversal opposite to that of the original story. In the film she starts out by encouraging "the Kid" to work for the rackets, to make money and live well. He resists because it goes against his values. Only after her imprisonment does he consent to work in the bootleg beer business. Nan's prison experience convinces her that he was right all along, not to want to get mixed up in crime, that it was she who was wrong. Upon her release from prison, she is heartbroken when she sees the mobster he has become.

At her welcome-home party she is forced against her wishes to dance all night with "Big Fella," the crime boss who wants her to become his new mistress. Agnes, his current mistress, instead of helping the young couple

escape, murders "Big Fella" and, out of jealousy, frames Nan with the murder. The escape at the end involves a series of reversals and elaborate plot invention with a bracing escape in a speeding car along a jagged coastal road.

Similar to many of Mamoulian's early efforts, City Streets is a modern-day morality play about the hard lives of the underclass and how the difficulties its members face lead them to make choices that, in some cases, bring out the best in them and show their potential for spiritual ascendancy; or, the worst in them, where they yield to their "animalistic" impulses of lust, greed, avarice, and practically every other deadly sin.

The city represents all that is atavistic; the country, to which they flee at the end, the world of nature, harmony, and hope. The society around is the villain. But an individual can refuse to become a victim by exercising free will and extricating himself or herself by being true to a higher vision and values.

In this way, Mamoulian's shooting script differed significantly from the Hammett original which has no such moral vantage point. How much of this had to do with Mamoulian is uncertain. He claimed on many occasions that he started working on all of his filmscripts from a blank page, working with the writers to craft a screenplay to his precise specifications. This was one aspect of

filmmaking that made it preferable to the theatre for him. However, every film Mamoulian directed began in the story department of the particular studio, with script development lasting months, sometimes years, before he had any connection with it. This was the case with City Streets as well as every other film he directed.

Mamoulian received no screen credit for screenplay or adaptation. Max Marcin received full credit for both. And in subsequent films, Mamoulian was never given screen credit for the screenplay. Unlike many directors who collaborated on the scripts they directed, for which they received screen credit, Mamoulian was never a member of the Screen Writers Guild. If, in fact, he was a co-author, he more than likely would have demanded screen credit. In some instances, studio files document correspondence and minutes from story conferences where Mamoulian's contributions are verified. But to say that he began each film with a clean slate seems an exaggeration, underscoring his need to be totally in charge and claim full credit for a process in which, especially in the Hollywood studio system of the 1930s, he was but one of the players in a truly collaborative process. In this process it was the studio management that held the ultimate creative control over the artistic product.

To circumvent some of management's artistic control, Mamoulian had learned from working on Applause, never

make additions to or deletions from dialogue or shots in the working script. This way studio executives and co-workers could not disapprove of his directorial decisions in advance. His continued experience only reinforced this lesson: if you tell those you work for and with what you are going to do, they will not like it and will try to stop it. But if you just do what you want without telling them, they usually like the finished product. On individual projects this may have served him well. But in the long run, this practice took its toll. In fact, it earned him a reputation with studio executives for bypassing accepted channels, thereby challenging the pecking order of authority and power. Many studio bosses did not care to hire someone with such disrespect.

Shortly after City Streets was supposed to start filming, Clara Bow suffered a much publicized nervous breakdown and withdrew from the film. She was soon replaced by Sylvia Sidney.

This film, like Applause, owes a great deal to the techniques of silent filmmaking, and, in particular, to D.W. Griffith whom Mamoulian revered. The film depends on imagery and montage rather than dialogue for its greatest impact. Mamoulian never abandoned this approach, whereas most other directors had already done so. Tom Milne provides a shot-by-shot account of the opening sequence of the film in which Mamoulian shows his mastery in creating a theatrically engaging premise:

The whole sequence is a brilliant, almost bravura display or pure cinema which leaves one in no doubt that Mamoulian knew and had thoroughly mastered the techniques of the silent film. As always in his work at its best, dialogue is strictly adjunct: important, but not necessary to an understanding of the action. Here the words are almost like stress marks, indicating the accents in a verse where the poetry is carried by the images, the rhymes by the editing and camera movements.²

Looming shadows, images of caged and free flying birds, and cats observing the proceedings provide visual signatures of Mamoulian's work in this film.

Technically, City Streets is known for Mamoulian's invention of the "voice-over." At first the studio marketing department was concerned that hearing someone on the screen talking without seeing their lips move would cause laughter and bewilderment in the audience. Mamoulian assured them that the soliloquy was a convention dating back centuries in the theatre which any audience would readily accept. He was correct in his prediction.

Another unique contribution Mamoulian made in this film was to introduce musical classics to the film's soundtrack, much as he had done with background music in his stage productions. Mamoulian's taste in selecting from the classics tended to be of the most familiar, the most readily recognizable nineteenth century classics of Wagner, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, and others. When he asked the music librarian at Paramount for music from Wagner's Tristan and Isolde to accompany a scene at the ocean where the waves are shown to swell and crash against the

rocks while birds soar overhead against a dramatic cloud-laden sky, the librarian remarked that he could get Mamoulian Wagner-like music that was even better than Wagner. Mamoulian chided the librarian for what he deemed to be a preposterous assertion, neglecting the homage due great works of art by geniuses. The presumptuousness was intolerable for Mamoulian, and he got his real Wagner for the scene.

Until this time, stock generic music was kept on file to be used for whatever effect the filmmaker desired. Contrary to an uplifting of mass culture to the realm of high art, Mamoulian unwittingly contributed to the debasement of high art rather than the greater appreciation of it by employing it to underscore his visual images. It becomes kitsch in the same way any high art does when it is appropriated for mass consumption. Advertisers use classic music and visual imagery in just this way.

This is a part of Mamoulian's idea of "art for life's sake." As such, it implies a social function rather than an aesthetic one. It becomes rechanneled into the pop culture of the mass media. Had he chosen to use the Wagner-like music he could have avoided such a result. Appropriating high art for just such a purpose was consistent with the underlying objectives of the studio moguls and the Motion Picture Producers and

Distributors Association. It legitimized their product as art.

The film was a critical and, this time, a box-office success. It was the earliest of a spate of gangster films in the early 1930s depicting organized crime during Prohibition. Unlike its successors, City Streets makes use of very little on-screen violence, something in which Mamoulian took great pride. Al Capone supposedly saw the film and found it to be the best of the gangster films. It remains essentially a romantic melodrama.

The Hays Office passed the film without censorship, finding nothing objectionable in it. Overall, the film encourages socially acceptable behavior and embraces normative values. When the studio requested permission to rerelease the film in December 1936, the petition was rejected mainly on the objection that the young couple commit crimes for which they never pay and escape the law much to the audience's pleasure.

Throughout the picture, there is a total lack of any indication that the forces of law and order are capable of coping with the illegal activities of the characters. The general flavor, therefore, is one of complete lawlessness and of the breakdown of the forces of law and order in this country.³

This is quite true, and it says something about the difference in perceptions of the censors between 1931 and 1936 and their intensified efforts to maintain a vigilant watch on what passed through their office. This film, like Applause, borrows from Expressionism in its style. The world-at-large is depicted as lawless and chaotic. It

is up to the individuals within it to create their own sense of order and acceptable modes of conduct.

Mamoulian's next film would carry this idea even farther.

With the success of City Streets, Mamoulian was able to exercise the complete artistic control over his next two projects that he had long sought. He produced as well as directed Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Love Me Tonight. With these films he had an ideal situation: the full resources of Paramount Studios at his disposal, coupled with autonomy over the projects. The results can be considered his two most characteristic works. Both are quintessential Mamoulian films in form and substance, making them his finest achievements.

Both films were written by the same writer, Samuel Hoffenstein. With these two films Mamoulian began a successful collaboration with art director Hans Dreier that would continue with Song of Songs and High, Wide and Handsome--his remaining films for Paramount.

Just as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde embodies Mamoulian's struggle with what he perceived to be the two opposing forces within man, the animalistic and the spiritual, as evidenced in the double identities of the film's protagonist, the two films, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Love Me Tonight, taken together, represent the compartmentalization of Mamoulian's two personas; one dark, the other light; the private and the public Mamoulian. Just as Jekyll and Hyde embody an inner schism

within Mamoulian, Maurice Courtelin, the witty, charming, romantic protagonist of Love Me Tonight, played by Maurice Chevalier, personifies the public Mamoulian who constructs his life to be a modern-day fairy-tale.

Look at the dark side first. Consider the following quotation:

My analysis of this soul, the human psyche, leads me to believe man is not truly one, but truly two. One of him strives for the nobility. This we call the good self. The other self seeks an expression of impulses that binds him to some dim animal relation with the earth. This we may call the bad. These two carry on an eternal struggle in the nature of man, yet they are chained together and that chain speaks repression to the evil, remorse to the good. Now, if these two selves could be separated from each other, how much freer the good in us would be. What heights it might scale and the so-called evil, once liberated, would fulfill itself and trouble us no more.⁴

This is Mamoulian articulating his philosophy of the nature of man and man's inner struggle. The struggle is decidedly a Christian one and, as Virginia Wright Wexman in her examination of Mamoulian's film states, a utopian one.

But the above quotation is not from Mamoulian. These are the words spoken by Fredric March as Dr. Jekyll in the opening sequence of the film. Consider how these words are transmitted in order to understand how thematically autobiographical this film is.

The opening sequence of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, again a demonstration of a bravura opening--a coup de theatre--takes place from the perspective of the camera. We do not see Jekyll because we, the camera, are Jekyll.⁵

The camera moves forward, back, and side-to-side, limiting our view to the narrow range of its field of vision. We make our way from the Jekyll home to the medical school lecture hall where Jekyll is going to speak. On stage the camera pans, taking in the audience members waiting to be addressed. As the lecture is about to begin, the camera rotates forcefully in a 180 degree arc revealing, for the first time, March as Jekyll, who proceeds to deliver the speech quoted above.

Clearly, the subjective viewpoint of the opening sequence establishes Jekyll and the man behind the camera as one and the same. The identity of the protagonist is established as the filmmaker himself. Having done so, Mamoulian is then free to have the audience confront Jekyll as observers. Mamoulian mounts his oratorical pulpit, in a lecture theatre, to address a vast audience through the eye of his lens.

Wexman focusses her discussion on the film's emphasis on the human form and the political, social, and anthropological significance of the various transformations depicted:

Of all the cinematic versions of Stevenson's tale, Rouben Mamoulian's, released in January 1932, is usually regarded as the most accomplished. This evaluation is based on the film's stylistic bravado as well as on the Academy Award-winning performance of Fredric March in the title role. Mamoulian emphasizes the representation of the human form even more than other directors do, both by March's suggestive portrayal and by stylistic devices, many of which--including mirrors, shadows, statuary, split-screen techniques, and lap dissolves--multiply images of the body.⁶

Wexman's analysis is based heavily on the application of Foucault's theories of sex and class as expounded in his History of Sexuality. Foucault describes how an emerging consciousness regarding sexuality and the resultant proscriptions on sexual conduct arose two centuries ago, not in order to stifle sexuality and minimize it, but actually to increase the attention paid to it, channeling it, and constructing an elaborate apparatus for examining it, only to finally apply a mask to the truths these examinations revealed. Wexman quotes from Foucault:

This class [the bourgeoisie], must be seen as being occupied from the mid-eighteenth century on with creating its own sexuality and forming a specific body based on it, a "class" body with its health, hygiene, descent, and race: the autosexualization of its body, the incarnation of sex in its body, the endogamy of sex and the body.⁷

From here, Wexman expands her discussion to include Hollywood's preoccupation with the body, with attractive appearance, and sees social implications in the conflict between the sexually preferable appearance of Dr. Jekyll and

. . . Hyde's ugliness [which], by contrast, provides the focal point for the story's horrific dimension, thereby signalling its position as the center around which the historical contradiction that motivates the film is elaborated, the contradiction between new business interests and new utopian aspirations held by previously disenfranchised groups [blacks and women].⁸

She discusses the political transition coinciding with the film's making and release, of political

opposition between Herbert Hoover, representing the rigid, tradition-bound conservative "interests of the business community at large," and Franklin Roosevelt, representing the aspirations of the underprivileged "toward greater freedom and equality" and in the opposition between General Carew, father of Muriel, the woman Jekyll wants to marry, and Jekyll himself, of whom the General disapproves because of his unconventional behavior and values, but whom Wexman describes as "utopian" in his aspirations. She further connects this conflict with fears, at the nadir of the Great Depression, amongst Wall Street bankers and the interests of the Hollywood studios that "the New Deal would usher in social anarchy."

Wexman goes on to elaborate on her theory, asserting that Mamoulian's neanderthal-appearing Hyde is a mask for the image of black man as rapist. This links a fear of the rising up of the American underclass with the myth of the black man as a primitive, sexual being--as animalistic. The horror in the film is masked horror of miscegenation. Wexman refers to another film released the year after, King Kong, which draws on the same analogy between the primitive man, the black ape-man, who covets "the golden woman," and similarly linked sublimated sexual and political fears. She refers to the various phallic symbols in the film and once again draws on Foucault in examining women as the objects of

subjugation, even more prominently than blacks, in the film:

The authority by which the film justifies the repression of woman's will is suggested by Jekyll's profession. Foucault and others have noted that physicians intervene in modern family life through their alliance with women and their authority over matters pertaining to the body. Foucault has postulated a panoptic system of "policing" bodies through a process of confession. Authority is vested in the doctor-confessor, who assumes the role formerly held by the priest.⁹

She cites examples of this in the film between Jekyll and his female patients, and especially between Jekyll and Ivy.

She explores the sexual references in the film at length, vis-a-vis their political implications, and then goes on to hypothesize how Mamoulian's stylistic technique has its basis in the films of his compatriot, Sergei Eisenstein, who used montage technique and symbolic visual references to comment on the social forces that shape the historical reality. In contrast, she shows how Mamoulian draws on the same techniques but for different ends. He explores the force of the individual on the historical reality, the consequences of man's will to power through genius and sexuality to create and destroy coming into conflict with the laws of nature, rather than any underlying social genesis of the conflict.

Finally, she concludes that Mamoulian's utopian ideal, and that of Hollywood, was based on the individual and not on a social model. The Hollywood-Mamoulian utopia

is an aesthetic one, centered on the physical beauty of the individual. She makes compelling reference to the use of statuary throughout the film as well as the physical transformation of Jekyll into Hyde and the female object of sexual desire as evidence of such a utopian view. She views the channelling of the political and economic conflicts in society into sexual conflict and idealization as symptomatic of our culture. She credits Hollywood, through films like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, with trivializing social conflicts into essentially narcissistic, aesthetic concerns. She sees the outcome as a culture "devoted to individual style in the guise of millennialism, the utopian vision of a new, freer social order."¹⁰ She draws on Mary Douglas' Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology to characterize millennialism:

The religious style is spontaneity, enthusiasm and effervescence. Bodily dissociation in trance, induced by dance or drugs, is valued along with other symbols of non-differentiation. Distinguishing social categories are devalued, but the individual is exalted. The self is presented without inhibition or shyness. There is little or no self-consciousness about sexual or other bodily orifices and functions. As to intellectual style, there is little concern with differentiated units of time, respect for past, or programme for the future. The dead are forgotten. Intellectual discriminations are not useful or valued.¹¹

Wexman does not mention the congruence between Jekyll's conflict and vision and Mamouljian's own. After Jekyll delivers his opening lecture to the medical students, we hear the reactions of those in attendance as

they leave the hall. An exchange between two amused students:

Student 1: Thinking of splitting in two like a jolly amoeba.

Student 2: By jove, it's marvelous!¹²

and

Student 4: Why don't you stay at home and send your other self to lectures!¹³

Alternately, one older professor confides to another:

To divide a human being in two--ridiculous.¹⁴

From the outset of the film, generational conflict is a dominant theme, one of central importance in all of Mamoulian's work. Any connection between this conflict and the external conflicts in America at the time is surely not an intentional one on Mamoulian's part. For Mamoulian, the generational conflict in the film is a representation of a political conflict of a personal nature rather than a societal one. If there was, as Mamoulian called it, a "united impulse" between the artist's personal vision and a social issue that was fine, but it was not one that was sought. The generational conflict in the film is between Jekyll and the older, authority figures: his older colleagues at the lecture who find his original ideas "ridiculous" and General Carew who finds Jekyll's behavior eccentric and contrary to convention.

Jekyll wants to move up the date of his wedding to the General's daughter, Muriel, because he cannot endure

sexual abstinence for the eight-month engagement period requested by Carew. To this Carew replies, "But why this impatience? Hang it man, it isn't done. It isn't done."¹⁵ With both of his colleagues and his father-in-law-to-be, Jekyll has his own ideas about things that go against convention. His frustration is that of an impatient, headstrong youth who wants to bypass normal channels and do things his way without obstruction from those whose acquiescence is required if he is to be able to pursue his objectives. The impatience of genius and sexual impatience are linked.

Jekyll continues to express this notion on his way home with his more conventionally-minded companion, Dr. Lanyon:

Lanyon: Well, I hope the responsibilities of marriage will sober you up.

Dr. Jekyll: I'm not marrying to be sober. I'm marrying to be drunk. Drunk with love and life and experiment.

Lanyon: Your experiment is absurd, my dear fellow.

Dr. Jekyll: You have no interest in science at all. You have no dreams, no curiosity.

Lanyon: There are bounds beyond which one should not go.

Dr. Jekyll: Yes, it isn't done I suppose. I tell you there are no bounds, Lanyon.¹⁶

This is the voice of Mamoulian against the representatives of status quo authority, whom he had to fight on virtually every project. In reference to The Game of Love

and Death, Mamoulian had succinctly put it, "Just because it isn't done is no reason not to have it."¹⁷

As Jekyll and Lanyon continue on their walk, we see a setting of London's Soho as expressionistic as anything filmed by G.W. Pabst. It is here that Jekyll has his initial encounter with Ivy, whom he rescues from attack in the street by a thwarted lover. Just as Jekyll and Hyde represent the dialectic between good and evil--the animalistic and the spiritual--Ivy represents of antithesis to Muriel. Yet it was not the good and spiritual Muriel who interested Mamoulian. And it is the pursuit of Ivy, the sexually free woman of the demi-monde to whom Jekyll turns to unleash his inner desires and potential. Miriam Hopkins, who played Ivy, recalled wanting the part of Muriel in the film and Mamoulian talking her out of it, saying, "It's three scenes. It's dull! You want to play the little cockney streetwalker of this, it's the greatest."¹⁸

Once saved by Jekyll, Ivy tries to seduce him in her room and arouses the passion that leads to his transformation into Hyde upon returning home that night. In a scene of erotic titillation that is highly sexually charged even by today's standards, Ivy places Jekyll's hand firmly in between her exposed thighs, indicating her desire. She proceeds to undress completely and gets into bed in his presence and ours. The doctor-patient relationship is a sexually charged one. Provocative talk

about pain yielding to pleasure not only foreshadows the emergence of Hyde, but also points to the dialectic between pain and pleasure that runs throughout the film.

The remainder of the scene continues the seduction. The image of Ivy's nude leg swinging seductively over the side of the bed lingers in Jekyll's mind, as a slow dissolve. Mamoulian uses split-screen dissolves throughout the film to juxtapose contrasting images of rich and poor, young and old, pure and impure, and most notably Jekyll's flight from one woman to another and all that each woman represents.

Jekyll's sexual escapade empowers him creatively and he returns to his laboratory to transform himself into Hyde, thereby freeing his heretofore repressed inner being. The drinking of the elixir is preceded by a somewhat comical image of death, with a shot of Jekyll's corpse-like servant Poole, standing beside a laboratory skeleton, foreshadowing Jekyll's own inevitable death. But the transformation from Jekyll into Hyde is jubilant, liberating, empowering.

Through a brilliant montage of flashback images revealing the inner motivations of liberation from authority and sexual repression, Hyde emerges. And, as Wexman does, a case can be made for Hyde having decidedly negroid facial characteristics. Mamoulian's stated intention was to make Hyde look Neanderthal. But the subliminal message associating Hyde with black males

would be consistent with this society's myths about the sexual prowess of black males, their physical power, and brutality. Phallic images of candelabra appear throughout the film, as does the image of Hyde's cane protruding from his cape, to be used later as a weapon.

Hyde finds Ivy at a music hall. Here we are treated to a few shots of a burlesque type of entertainment similar to the one depicted in Applause. Hyde seats himself at a table and with a waiter goes through a customary verbal service ritual. But Hyde, now free of his mask as Jekyll, brutally cuts through the ritual, having no need to adhere to conventional rules of social decorum. He spots Ivy, singing the song, "Champagne Ivy." This bears an allusion to the champagne aria scene in Mozart's Don Giovanni, with its thematic similarities of the unrepentant seducer about to face retribution and death for his violations. Hyde manages to assert his will over Ivy through money and physical intimidation. His lovemaking throughout the film is so sadistic and brutal as to render it almost unbearable to watch. The unrelenting verbal cruelty which energizes the scenes between Hyde and Ivy is highly reminiscent of those between Crown and Bess in Porgy, between Thi Linh and her various suitors in Congai, between Natalia Petrovna and Aleksei Nikolaevich Bialiaev in A Month in the Country, between Kitty and Hitch in Applause, and between Nan and Big Fella Maskal in City Streets.

Women are alternately placed on a pedestal or brutalized. In either case, they are inaccessible. For Jekyll and the male protagonists of Mamoulian's other projects, their idealization of women keeps them at a distance from their object of desire, whereas the unleashing of their aggression repulses these women who resist being taken by force. Passion is closely linked to rage.

Muriel is the good woman who offers maternal love to Jekyll but is sexually inaccessible. Ivy is the seductive music hall performer who also rejects him. His rage over this rejection results in his acts of cruelty and eventual brutal killing of Ivy in the course of "lovemaking." Sexuality, although presented by Jekyll as something natural and in need of spontaneous expression, is revealed, through Hyde, to be something frightening, uncontrollable, and hideous. Anyone who would agree to take part in such activity is contemptible and needs to be destroyed.

The struggle with sexuality and the anger towards women in this film are revealing of a more basic fear; the need to be destroyed by the representatives of male authority for allowing sexual and creative power to emerge; a power so strong as to threaten the existing power structure. The death of Jekyll in the end shows the necessary outcome of daring to challenge authority.

Mamouljian was obsessed with his struggles against authority. Winning these battles made him feel a stronger, but, like Jekyll who finally lets his assertion of power lead to the destruction of the older male adversary, General Carew, annihilation of the impediment leads to such unbearable remorse that only self-annihilation can consume it. Mamouljian won battles, of which he boasted, against producers and powerful co-workers, but his power frightened him into retracting the subversive outcome to which all of his productions pointed ultimately yielding to a conclusion that restored the status quo. The oedipal conflict is played out in Mamouljian's work, but the success so desired, once achieved, brings such remorse that the triumph cannot be left unpunished.

When the film came before the review board in December 1931, it passed virtually without incident. In a few markets the sexually explicit undressing scene and sexually sadistic murder of Ivy were subject to deletion. Some markets received prints with deletions requested, "For Sunday Showing Only," but were otherwise left intact. What would seem to be a work destined for quarrel with the censors reached the theatres in 1932 in its original form. This was in part because the film was based on an acknowledged literary classic, but mainly because of the exceptional quality of the film. The review board concluded:

The camera effects, the make-up, the dissolves and the acting are of a superior quality and the picture as a whole is magnificently done.¹⁹

Perhaps Wexman's assessment of the film's underlying socio-political content further accounts for the film's ability to bypass what would have been considered at the time censorable material.

When the film was re-released by Paramount in 1935, the political climate had changed. After the new guidelines of the production code of 1934, the Hays Office suggested eliminating the undressing scene which had passed the review board in 1931. The MPPDA files on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde contain much discussion expressing concern over the proliferation of horror films at the time. References were made to Dracula, Frankenstein, and Freaks, as well as Mamoulian's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The board felt that there were only a few basic stories to exploit in this genre, and these had been done to saturation. They feared that producers would find the only way to treat these subjects in a new and marketable way would be to add more and more gruesome and lurid effects to the already familiar plots. The consensus was that the latitude given to filmmakers of horror movies had to be restricted to boundaries which the films just mentioned had, in their opinion, already exceeded. The 1942 M. G. M. remake of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, directed by Victor Fleming, lacks the explicit sexuality of the Mamoulian film as well as the artistry

whose source lay within the corresponding conflicts of both protagonist and filmmaker. Unfortunately, when M. G. M. purchased the rights to the Stevenson novella, they also purchased the distribution rights to the Mamouliau film and promptly withdrew it from circulation. For the same reasons as those in 1942, Mamouliau's film version can be seen only at special showings by museums, film festivals, and revival art houses. As a result, most viewers only know the miscast and unimaginatively directed version starring Spencer Tracy, Ingrid Bergman, and Lana Turner.

As Wexman suggests, the film does focus on bodily appearance, allure, sexual functioning, regulation, and the horror of the body's ultimate decay. Another interpretation shows this focus to have an alternately autobiographical meaning. Like the distancing effect of the film's opening sequence, focus on the artifice of the protagonist's appearance establishes his appearance as a mask. Jekyll's beauty masks the horror of Hyde within. Fredric March's make-up as Hyde acts as a mask to remind the audience that this aspect of the protagonist is also a representation of an idea rather than something real. It makes a statement about the presentation of the self as possible only through a mask. The reflexivity of the film points to the importance of the idea of appearances as maskings of deeper interior conflicts which must be sustained in order for the individual to function in the

real world. To strip them away is to render oneself vulnerable to death. Art involves the application of the mask as a means of unmasking essential truths. It is only beneath the mask of art that the inner essence of the artist can be fully revealed. In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Mamoulian is saying, "Here I am," "This is me." Whatever subliminal social statements the film may contain, Mamoulian's artistic consciousness remained fixed on the personal. He lets us know that he wears a mask, a mask that is inseparable from himself. But through his art, through his genius of technical innovation, he is able to reveal a deeper truth, to strip away the figurative mask.

Mamoulian, as bravura showman, calls attention to the scenes of transformation of Jekyll into Hyde and Hyde into Jekyll. He shot these transformations without the aid of editing by a process he kept secret until the late 1960s, involving the filming of March through a series of colored filters which, in the black and white film processing, when removed or added, would reveal or add a layer of the mask of Hyde visible to the audience.

The metaphor of strip-tease is used in this instance to titillate the audience, to provide another coup de theatre to further attest to the genius of Mamoulian, whose genius, like Jekyll's, is in using science (film technology) to show us the inner reality hidden from us by a surface reality. Jekyll, who wears no apparent mask, covers up his inner being. Hyde, who wears a mask,

behaves totally unencumbered by the mask of social decorum and the control of the super ego.

To this strip-tease, Mamouliau is able to add his characteristic scenes of female strip-tease, thereby stimulating the libidinal impulses which open the path to creative genius. The power of sex which is linked to genius as a catalyst, is a force of such power as to be unsafe if released; incapable of being controlled, leading inevitably to destruction. This is the allure and the terror of sexual energy.

In a 1977 interview, Mamouliau remarked that the one genre he never directed that he would have liked to was the revue. He always had the idea of including in a revue, a reverse strip-tease. Here a woman would begin totally nude, and then seductively apply the garments to her body that would eventually cover her.²⁰ This, he said, he would find much more erotic than the exposing of the body. Only when there was mystery was the presentation erotically charged. As in the story of the man from Kansas City, Mamouliau needed artifice to take him away from the familiar. Through a masking, an aestheticizing of reality, its unpleasant truths could be kept from destroying life. To strip away all of the protective covering is compelling, but annihilating in its consequences; a very dangerous thing.

If Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde called attention to the mask of appearances and the consequences of uncovering

them--of showing man as he truly is--then Mamoulian's next film, Love Me Tonight, finds him showing us the mask he wears of man as he ought to be; charming, witty and gracious. Having revealed the fearful outcome of stripping away the mask, Mamoulian decides to show us the fantasy world that can become reality if a mask is applied, rather than stripped away--his ideal strip-tease in reverse.

Maurice Chevalier, who virtually plays himself as Maurice Courtelin, is the Mamoulian that most people saw; the persona he cultivated for public presentation, the public mask. Chevalier epitomized style in its truest sense, as something that radiates from within a person and informs everything about him, as opposed to manner which is appropriated from elsewhere and applied externally. In a posthumous tribute, Mamoulian described Chevalier:

His stylized silhouette, the saucy angle of his straw hat, his smile, the way he moved, sang and talked was not only artistically perfect, but spiritually uplifting to young and old. He radiated optimism, good will and above all the joie de vivre that every human being longs for.²¹

Such a description harkens back to Paul Horgan's description of the Mamoulian he knew in Rochester. This was the persona Mamoulian cultivated for himself.

In contrast to the outcome of Jekyll's sexual pursuits, Maurice's sexual pursuit leads him to the Paramount world as Gabler described it:

. . . a world of sheen and sex where people spoke in

innuendo, acted with abandon, and doubted the rewards of virtue.²²

This is the world of Love Me Tonight. In a strange way, it might also describe the world of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

The protagonist of Love Me Tonight, like that of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, is a rakish young man, a master at his profession who pursues an unobtainable woman of virtue. The young woman is kept shut away in a fortress by an older man who has very old fashioned notions of what qualities a proper suitor for this young woman must possess. Another young woman, who is sexually free, offers herself to the hero, but he is steadfast in his pursuit of the sexually unavailable woman. Unlike the nightmarish consequences of sexual pursuit in defiance of an older male authority witnessed in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the protagonist of Love Me Tonight is able to disarm both the stern, disapproving older male, and the unobtainable female, through charm, allowing them all to fall in love with one another in the end. This is the outcome Mamouljian always created for the history of his own life. But it remained in contrast to the dreaded outcome of his bold defiance which he left unreported, yet exposed in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Love Me Tonight takes a Jekyll-like character who needs no potion to summon his animalistic side. No Hyde appears because sex is not a threatening force of destruction. In this scenario, the hero's pursuit of sexual gratification is

assisted rather than thwarted. He overcomes obstacles easily instead of being overcome by them. There is never any doubt that he will get what he wants.

Like the physician Jekyll who, as Foucault tells us, intervenes in modern family life through his alliance with women and his authority over matters pertaining to the body--who polices women's bodies through a process of confession--Maurice, the tailor, is able to examine his patient, Jeanette, as she disrobes for him; he is privy to an unmasking of great intimacy by virtue of his profession. She submits to his examination in the hopes of being relieved of her complaint, a sexually induced ailment which he will cure through corrective action applied to bodily appearance. In fact, this stripping scene is preceded by another one involving an actual physician who, through innuendo, diagnoses her complaint as a sexual one and prescribes sex as a cure. Unlike Jekyll, the titillation of this professional probing does not liberate a Hyde from within. Maurice's sexuality is a delight rather than a horror.

Both films contain key scenes set in a garden, outside the sexually restrictive confines of the house, the domain of the older male adversary. There the young protagonist feels free to propose a union between himself and his unavailable object of sexual desire. The settings in the two films resemble one another closely, and there is great similarity in the way the two scenes are

photographed. Both scenes make use of striking close-ups of the two characters separately, to show the mutual passion aglow within each of them. In both cases the male protagonist is attempting to break down the resistance of the female love object to his sexual advances. He inspires mutual desire in the woman, but both women, in spite of their sexual arousal, remain essentially unavailable to him. Ultimately, in the happy ending of *Love Me Tonight*, the female character yields to the hero's seduction.

The split-screen technique and wipes used in a divisive way in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to show the split natures of the characters are used again in *Love Me Tonight* to unite characters and situations. A case in point is the scene in which the title song, "Love Me Tonight," is sung. Both Maurice and Jeanette have gone to bed. We see both of them asleep in their respective beds, heads on pillows, each dreaming of the other. The song is sung in voice-over as Mamoulian juxtaposes the two sleeping figures side by side in a split-screen thereby placing the two characters literally in bed together. Mamoulian achieves the sexual union in this dream world and does it with an ingenuity that serves him doubly as a means to bypass censorship prohibitions against such literal depictions.

In short, Maurice's sexual energy and allure is a welcome and much-needed intrusion to an environment of

stagnation because of sexual repression and social convention. Jekyll's is depicted as equally needed but unwelcome. Mamoulian depicts the stagnant world in Love Me Tonight vividly and with satiric wit in a bridge party scene where the players are virtually rotting in place. An equally stifling party scene takes place in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde to establish the suffocating world of General Carew, also in need of liberation from social convention.

Both are films of rebellion and liberation. Status quo values are represented by older male figures who use their authority to control the instincts of the young. Convention is the destroyer of nature. One rebellion ends tragically, the other happily. In one, youth is able to overturn convention.

Both films depict heroes who live double lives. Much of the plot in both films revolves around the unmasking of the hidden identity of the male protagonist. The outcome of the unmasking in one case is tragic, in the other, comic. Both use their professional identities as a means of sexual access to women who would be otherwise unavailable to them. Jekyll journeys to the sexual underworld of Diadem Court, drawing on its closeness to instinct and nature to revitalize himself and return fully charged to the bloodless, corpse-like world of the higher social classes.

Maurice is the artist of the lower classes who brings his potency and baser instincts as a life force to the stagnant aristocracy, revitalizing it. Mamoulian was both Jekyll and Courtelin. Like Jekyll, he was the aristocrat of genius, in conflict with authority, who indulged in illicit adventures, keeping sexuality compartmentalized in a hidden realm from which he drew a great energizing power. But he was also like Maurice, forced to assume the role of the immigrant outsider, the artist, dependent on acceptance by status quo authority for survival and self-fulfillment, just as they were dependent on him to infuse a sterile culture with the life force of his art. Both protagonists embody Mamoulian's dilemma. In one case rebellious self-assertion leads to self-destruction; in the other to triumph. His life experiences were both of the nature of Jekyll and of Maurice. He never spoke of the one; he never tired of recounting the other. Both heroes are undeterred in their will to power. Whether power is met with power, or rendered harmless by it, Mamoulian and his heroes pursue it in spite of their fears. He replays the lesson of Grandma Kate over and over again: be not afraid of challenge by a powerful adversary. Take big risks whatever the consequences because the rewards of boldness are worth the risks.

This was a message that conformed well to the values the studios wanted to disseminate. These are the values

at the core of this culture, those of individualism and assertion of will in a competitive world.

The story of Love Me Tonight concerns Maurice Courtelin, a Parisian tailor whose client, Vicomte Gilbert de Varese, has accumulated a large bill for custom-made clothing. When the local hatmaker, bootmaker, and shirtmaker find out that the Vicomte never pays his bills, they coerce Maurice into going to the country estate of the Vicomte's uncle, the Duke, to collect the monies owed. Along the way, Maurice meets Princess Jeanette (MacDonald) who is in need of assistance with her horse and buggy, and declares his love for her. She rebuffs his advances and returns home to none other than the castle of the Duke where Maurice is headed. She is chronically depressed and fatigued. Maurice arrives at the castle and before he can collect his money from the Duke, the Vicomte intercepts Maurice and enlists him in a deceptive scheme to meet both of their financial needs by having Maurice pose as a baron.

The rest of the film follows the obstacle-laden path Maurice travels to win over Jeanette and maintain his false identity. In typical well-made play fashion, just as he wins Jeanette, his true identity is exposed, to tumultuous reception by all. Their union is broken apart just at the moment of success. He leaves to return to his plebeian home. She realizes that true love matters more than maintaining class distinctions and dashes off on

horseback to meet his train. She passes the rushing train, dismounts, and stands on the track to stop it. The train screeches to a sudden halt, and Maurice and Jeanette are reunited.

What distinguishes the film from other similar formula pieces is the film's ability to parody the very forms it is using through masterful application of the Mamoulian repertoire of stylized cinematic techniques.

The film opens with a montage of early morning Paris. Bit by bit, we see the city wake up. Some critics have claimed that Love Me Tonight is derivative of Rene Clair's film Sous Les Toits du Paris, especially in its opening sequence.²³ Whatever resemblance it bears to the Clair film, the opening is a near replication of the early morning awakening scene of Catfish Row in Porgy. One at a time, in rhythmic progression, we see the people of Paris commence their daily tasks, from sweeping the sidewalk and opening shutters, to beating rugs and squeezing bellows. Horses clip-clop as deliveries are made, and on and on until a symphony of sounds is created, or recreated, and the city has come to life in its full cacophony. The sequence ends with the camera dollying into the room where Maurice lives, and we see Chevalier's signature straw hat hanging on a nail on the wall above a silhouette of Chevalier outlined by the cracks in the wall as we hear him sing "The Song of Paree." In this shot, as again a number of times in the

film, we are treated to an example of Mamoulian's technique of "seamless editing" as we move in and out of doors seemingly without a break in the camera movement; as if the camera could move freely back and forth through the walls without stopping to change vantage point.

The songs in the film, an early cinema effort by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, provide a brilliant musical accompaniment and wit, adding immeasurably to the quality of the film. The ease with which the songs evolve out of the drama of the moment from speech to Sprechgesang to outright song and back again provides an integration of musical comedy elements unseen in film prior to Love Me Tonight and not seen again until Mamoulian's subsequent film and stage musicals.

The blending of drama and song is noticeable throughout the film, but it is used to greatest effect with the song "Isn't it Romantic?" As Tom Milne aptly points out, "In a very real sense, Love Me Tonight is one long, unbroken production number."²⁴ He provides a lively description of the dramatic sequence which the song initiates:

. . . the "Isn't it Romantic?" number near the beginning of the film grows out of a conversation between tailor Maurice Courtelin (Maurice Chevalier) and his customer Emile (the portly, amiable Bert Roach), for whom he has just made a wedding suit. Emile emerges from the fitting-room in raptures, and the conversation slips easily into doggerel rhyme:
 Emile: It's beautiful. . . It's a work of art.
 Maurice: The tailor's art/For your sweetheart.
 Emile: It's like poetry in a book!/How beautiful I look!

Maurice: The love song of the needle/Is united with the thread. The romance of the season. . .

Emile: /so clear that I could wed.

Maurice: Isn't it romantic?

and as easily from this into Chevalier singing "Isn't It Romantic?" while Emile admires himself. Then Emile, preparing to leave and suddenly remembering his stick, picks up the tune (but not the words) and sings:

Isn't it romantic? da..da..da..da..da. a very catchy strain.

Isn't it romantic? . . . Oh, I forgot my cane! Outside, Emile turns down a taxi, preferring to walk in his new finery, and the taxi-driver catches the theme from him while picking up another client (Isn't it romantic?. . . At last I've got a fare) His fare is a musician who listens with all his ears (Isn't it romantic. . . I think I'll take that down) before being dropped at the station. On the train the musician busily composes, overheard by the soldiers on leave who take up the theme; cut to a troop of marching soldiers appearing over the skyline in full-throated chorus, overheard by a passing gypsy violinist who rushes off excitedly; cut again to the violinist playing the theme at a gypsy camp in the forest. . . . And the momentum isn't running out yet by a long chalk. From the gypsy encampment in the wood (by now in a transition one barely notices, it is night), the camera pans round to a vast Gothic castle, and dissolves to Princess Jeanette (Jeanette MacDonald) embarking on a tender soprano version of the song on the moonlit balcony 25

This film, like most other Mamoulian films, really moves. Other formal features of the film include the use of fast and slow-motion, striking facial close-ups, and shadow-play. The latter is most notable in the gypsy encampment referred to by Milne, visually resembling both the saucer burial scene from Porgy and foreshadowing the bandit encampment in The Gay Desperado; and, the scene later in Love Me Tonight where Chevalier, the tailor pretending to be a baron, pretends to be a tailor at a costume ball at the castle and sings the song "Poor

Apache." Use of shadow-play abounds throughout the film as it does through all of Mamoulian's work.

In addition to the use of the split-screen, wipes, and dissolves mentioned earlier, this film, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, contains many scenes photographed in the montage style of Sergei Eisenstein. In particular, the final scene where Princess Jeanette is shown thinking of Maurice leaving on the train. Through superimposition of the image of the moving train on her forehead in a close shot of her face; we see her thought. This is followed by her own departure on horseback to intercept the moving train. The photographic angles and the rapid back and forth intercutting of the racing locomotive wheels and the racing horse's legs make for a particularly Eisensteinian final sequence. It is done to exhilarating effect, yet its deliberate mannerism further extends the parodic aspect of the film.

So, too, does the film satirize the Lubitsch series of collaborations with Chevalier and MacDonald which preceded Love Me Tonight and with which Love Me Tonight is often compared. As with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this film is so loaded with detail of composition that one would need to do a frame-by-frame analysis of the film to do full justice to the richness of the visual imagery, rhythm, and wit.

The film, like all of Mamoulian's work, is mainly concerned with sex. It employs considerable sexual

innuendo as well as double entendre, consistent with both Mamoulian's taste for sexual tease, for masking and unmasking, and for the Paramount style of film. In the film's opening sequence in Paris, the amorous neighborhood dwellers are shown flirting on the streets with prospective lovers as they sneak home to their spouses after spending the night with their current lovers. In the tailor shop we are treated to immodest dressing and undressing, and later in the castle a physician examines a scantily-clad Jeanette MacDonald pronouncing his diagnosis, "You're not wasting away, you're just wasted." Maurice is also privileged to examine Jeanette in her underwear seductively wrapping a tape measure around her bust and squeezing it snugly to read the measurement properly.

When we first encounter Princess Jeanette on her balcony singing "Isn't it Romantic?", she is interrupted by a bumbling Count having arrived out of nowhere with a thud as his ladder crashes onto her upper story balcony. Shocked at the intrusion she says:

Princess: Count! I'm going to bed!

Count: I just came up to join you.

Princess: Join me!

Count: Join you in a little chat before dinner.

Princess: Not tonight. I've had another fainting spell and my uncle the Duke thought bed was the best place for me.

Count: I always think that. . . . I brought along my flute hoping to entertain.²⁶

At this point the Count loses his balance on the ladder and crashes to the ground. We hear him cry out, "Oh! I'll

never be able to use it again," to which she responds, "Oh, Count, did you break your leg?" "No, I fell flat on my flute," he rejoins. The Vicomte, played by character-actor Charles Ruggles, asks Valentine, the sexually available counterpart to Jeanette, played by Myrna Loy, when Jeanette faints on the floor, "Can you go for a doctor?" and she instantly retorts, "Certainly, bring him right in!"

The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America took note of all the sexual innuendo and nudity in the film and made notes of its objections to the above mentioned scenes, plus more. Song lyrics were also reviewed and objections made to some of them including, "Bells need tinkling, flowers need sprinkling, and a woman needs something like that."²⁷ Canadian distributors provided the MPPDA with a long list of suggested deletions of sexually suggestive lines and images. A series of quips about virgins was deleted from the film. In most cases the film was passed with minimal censorship and received high praise in the press. After the 1934 tightening of obscenity guidelines, plans to rerelease the film in 1937 ran into difficulties. A letter from Joseph Breen to a Mr. Hammell at Paramount illustrates the difficulty:

After an inspection of the files and records in connection with this picture, we would suggest that you withdraw your application, as it apparently contains a great deal of suggestive dialogue. Some of the lyrics seem to be particularly offensive in this respect, and it would seem, from a cursory inspect-

ion, that any attempt to re-edit it would ruin the picture.²⁸

Finally, Mamoulian's experience working on Love Me Tonight tested his will once again against studio bosses and starring actors. Mamoulian told how he came to direct Love Me Tonight:

One day shortly after I finished Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and everybody was happy about its prospects, I encountered Adolph Zukor on the lot. As you know, the executives of this era were often far more persuasive actors than the players under contract to them. Zukor, with tears in his eyes, implored me to produce and direct a film with Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald. Both of them were under big salaried contracts to Paramount, and, according to Zukor, the studio was on the brink of bankruptcy so it was imperative that stars like Chevalier and MacDonald be constantly used. I protested that I wasn't the man for the job, that Lubitsch had done well with these two players in the past, and suggested Mr. Zukor approach him. But Lubitsch was busy with other projects, Zukor said, and wouldn't I please give it a try?

I promised to think about it, and the more I thought about it, the more interesting doing a light musical film became to me. But I couldn't find a suitable property. And then at a party, while talking to Leopold Marchand, a European writer then working at Paramount, I learned that he had a slight story idea that might be attractive. It was only two pages long, but when I read it, I thought it had a kind of fairy tale romantic magic, and I asked the studio to buy it.

I then got Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart to develop the songs for the film. . . . Only Chevalier was, in the beginning, disturbed. He approached me one day and said, "I understand you're having story conferences on my next picture." I told him yes, that was true, but I was first working with the song writers. He wondered why he wasn't included in the discussions. Lubitsch, he said, always had him present at all pre-production meetings. I said that was all very well, that was the way Lubitsch worked; but Lubitsch wasn't doing Love Me Tonight--I was, and I worked my way, and I especially didn't want him on hand at story conferences. He was hurt and he said he would complain to the front office. I told him to please do so, that I hadn't wanted this picture and was only doing it as a favor to Mr.

Zukor, and would consider it a very special favor if he could get me taken off it.

Maurice, of course, didn't go to the front office. . . . and we remained close friends all his life.²⁹

German novelist-playwright Herman Sudermann's Das H he Lied had been made by Paramount as a silent film, The Song of Songs, for Pola Negri. At least as early as 1930, Paramount was working on a sound remake based on the same story. By 1931, a treatment by S.K. Lauren and Josephine Lovett entitled, "The Search for Love," and subtitled "Song of Songs," in an early 1932 synopsis and treatment evolved in Paramount's story department into a first screenplay by Leo Birinski entitled, "The Song of Songs." Other scripts by other collaborators, in typical studio script development evolution, were written. The final result was a release dialogue script in July of 1933 still entitled "The Song of Songs." The "The" was finally dropped when the film was actually released.

As early as November 1931, Will Hays was writing to Jesse Lasky discouraging such a project by referring to a critique of the silent film version containing harsh criticism of the moral character of the central female figure. This was only the beginning of the censorship difficulties to plague this film. Long before Mamoulian was in any way connected with the project, this film, as with all films Mamoulian made, was undergoing an evolutionary process of development by committee that

ultimately led to the shaping of the final product by the director.

In 1931, when Paramount was trying to resurrect The Song of Songs, the film was proposed as a starring vehicle for Tallulah Bankhead. But it was in late 1932 that Paramount decided that Marlene Dietrich needed to be relieved of her mentor Josef Von Sternberg. Von Sternberg supposedly suggested Mamoulian direct Dietrich in her first film without him, and Song of Songs ended up as a Dietrich vehicle rather than a Bankhead one.

For his film, Mamoulian, as producer one last time, as well as director, was able to reassemble a group of co-workers responsive to his sensibilities. Samuel Hoffenstein once again served as screenwriter, turning Leo Birinski's script into the kind of film reflective of Mamoulian's vision. Mamoulian hired Art Director Hans Dreier who, like Hoffenstein, had worked on both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Love Me Tonight as well as Love Me Tonight's Director of Photography, Victor Milner to work on Song of Songs.

Song of Songs is in many ways an amalgam of the two previous films, with less impressive results, but equally packed with themes central to Mamoulian's life and work realized through much of the already established Mamoulian technical vocabulary.

The film is a romantic fable containing both the tragic elements of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and the comic

elements of Love Me Tonight. Literal references to both films can be seen in Song of Songs, as well as new themes that resurface with greater impact in Mamoulian's following feature, Queen Christina, starring the screen's other reigning love-goddess, Greta Garbo. Song of Songs is the story of an innocent country girl who, after the death of her sole surviving parent, her father, comes to live with her aunt in the city. The aunt runs a bookshop in Berlin where Lily, the girl, is forced to live and work under oppressive supervision and scrutiny.

A sculptor, Richard, who lives across the street, flirts with Lily while browsing in the bookshop. He invites her to pose for him. At first she refuses, but soon reverses her decision and accepts his offer. At first she is shy about modelling. But after a while, her growing love for him, and the freedom she feels from the oppressiveness of life with her aunt when she is with him, strips away her defenses as well as her clothes. This process transforms her from a girl into a woman.

However, the more seriously she feels about him, the more frightened he becomes of his feelings for and commitment to her. Another admiring customer of Lily at the bookshop, the Baron, offers to provide the kind of material well-being for Lily that the sculptor Richard cannot. Richard rationalizes turning Lily over to the Baron's care as being practical; thinking of her well-being. Actually it is his own need to distance himself

from Lily's unquestioning and powerful love that motivates him to abandon her. To further his objectives, the Baron offers Lily's aunt cash payment to take the girl off her hands. After the Baron bargains up the aunt's asking price, she accepts the cash and throws her niece out onto the street. Lily shows up at her lover's studio, but he, for his reasons, turns her over to the Baron. The Baron takes her to live with him, at first intending only for her to be his mistress, but he soon yields to her charms, making her his wife. Mistreated by her aunt, and rejected by Richard, Lily is utterly disillusioned about love, totally without trust of other human beings, and no longer capable of feeling anything but hardened cynicism.

In a scene in which Richard comes to visit the Baron and the new Baroness at their country estate, Lily storms off to the cottage of a handsome young riding instructor to seduce him. This act arouses the jealous anger of the Baron who chases her off the grounds with a gun.

The next time we see her she is a cabaret entertainer in Berlin. And the first time we see her here, so too does Richard, who one night happens to be in the bar where Lily is working. He confronts her about her new unrespectable lifestyle. She defends herself with hardened recriminations for what he has done to her, blaming him for having ended up living such a life. She thanks him for forcing her to learn a lesson in life; a

lesson that left her no longer naive and trusting about people or love. Remorseful, he persuades her to return with him to his studio where she sees the completed statue for which she had posed a long time before. He suggests they try to return to their relationship of that time. Enraged, she picks up a sledge-hammer and destroys the statue declaring that the woman of the statue no longer exists. Whereupon, the two reconcile and reunite.

The opening credits to the film are set to a background accompaniment of music from the third act of Richard Wagner's Die Walküre. Once again, Mamoulian makes use of recognizable classics for musical soundtracking to his films rather than stock sound footage or original scoring. It serves not only to associate his work with elite culture, but to establish the German setting of the film, while setting up dramatic and thematic foreshadowing of upcoming incidents in the film. The character Brünnhilde of the Wagner Ring possesses goddess-like qualities of purity and strength, like the innocent girl of the early part of the film and the classical goddess-like sculpture of her. Both Brünnhilde and Lily are transformed from their pre-conscious states to sexually-aware womanhood through contact with a young hero who later betrays them. Both women, in turn, wreak vengeance by starting fires. It is their awakening to love and subsequent loss of purity and betrayal which ultimately leads to self-destruction. The magic fire

music from the third act of Die Walküre foreshadows the fire in the film that will lead to Lily's banishment from her own "Valhalla"-- the castle of the Baron.

The opening shot of the film looking up from the ground-level at the parson delivering a stern graveside message is pure Eisenstein and sets up the moral-fable tone of the film. The parson speaks in rhythmic speech. The music changes to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony and we catch our first glimpse of Dietrich, as Lily, with a close-up shot of her head hidden behind a hat as she turns around to full view, reminiscent of the 180 turn that first reveals Jekyll. Each transformation of Lily in the film emerges from behind a large hat with a turn of the head in close-up.

The hat is a mask. And as in the previous films, the application of the mask and its stripping away are significant metaphors. At first, Lily wears the mask of innocence which covers up the sexual desire which, through the young artist and his art, is revealed by means of a stripping away. She later wears a different sort of mask to cover up the awakened feelings. Just as the artist had undressed her, the baron dresses her up to transform her into an artistic creation of his own making. Later, we see her as the theatrical entertainer, an identity common to virtually all Mamoulian heroines. As a performer playing a role, she again wears a mask of sorts. In the end, she destroys the last vestiges of her

masked identity. She drops her mask of disdain and destroys the nude statue still standing in the artist's studio, no longer willing or able to assume an identity created for her and imposed on her by others. She is finally liberated.

The idea of liberation from constraints imposed by society or powerful individuals upon whom one is dependent for survival in order to be true to oneself, runs throughout Mamoulian's films. The central characters cannot fulfill themselves by following conventional modes of behavior.

The notion of double identities, of living a double life, of the dual nature of the individual, of the outer world of images or appearance and the inner world of desire and fear of the consequences of that desire unmasked, operates at many levels in Song of Songs. The character Lily undergoes transformations of unmasking, masking, and once again unmasking her inner identity. Lily is like Virginia and Svetlana Mamoulian. She, like Mamoulian's mother as a young woman, in her innocence sought true love and the protection of an older male mentor in whom she put her trust. Betrayed, she lives a double life, an exterior life of appearances to satisfy social convention, and a hidden one of unacceptable desires and vocation. Svetlana, like Lily, was also destroyed by placing her trust in her lover who did not take care of her as he should have. The happy ending to

the film, which goes against the conclusion to the Sudermann original, and on the screen seems artificial and unconvincing, may have expressed a need by Mamoulian to resolve in art what was not resolved in life.

On another level, there is a dialectic of identities and their masking and unmasking, operating in the relationship between Lily, the character, and Dietrich, the actress. In the films of Josef Von Sternberg, Dietrich had established a film persona making any film characterization inseparable from herself. For her first film with another director, Mamoulian made her act, so that she would be more than a photographed mannequin. But Mamoulian knew that the audience came to see Dietrich, not Lily, and on one level, Mamoulian forced Dietrich to strip away the mask of Dietrich and show what else she could be. But every so often he returned to the Von Sternbergian Dietrich as if not to disappoint the audience's expectations. The goddess-like statue of Lily can also be viewed as a symbol of the mannequin Dietrich, the screen-goddess Dietrich, who cannot be herself but must assume the identity that Von Sternberg and Paramount, and even now Mamoulian, have sculpted for her. This Dietrich is artifice, a creation, not the real human being; one whose survival and success depended on her submitting to her handlers. Years later when asked about her experience working with Mamoulian she replied simply, "I did what I was told."³⁰ The dialectic between the

performer and the role will take on greater prominence in Mamoulian's next film, Queen Christina.

The two central male characters in Song of Songs resemble to Jekyll and Hyde. Once again we have a young male protagonist, an artist, who lives an unconventional life and creates his greatest work when transformed by the power of love. Although the power of love inspires his capabilities, he is also afraid of intimacy, perceiving it as a threat to his autonomy. Richard as sculptor, like Jekyll the doctor, and Maurice Courtelin the tailor, practices a profession that provides him intimate access to women. He is a total stranger to Lily, yet she must reveal her most private self to him.

The Baron is Hyde. He has a skull and crossbones on his helmet. He wears a monocle, much as Mamoulian had worn pince-nez. The two men, Richard and the Baron, represent the spiritual and the animalistic in Mamoulian, his Jekyll and Hyde split nature. The Baron is repulsive to Lily and uses his wealth to wield power over her. The intimate scenes between them recall the sadistic scenes between Hyde and Ivy in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

After we are first introduced to Lily in the cemetery, Mamoulian moves the opening scene along in the manner of Love Me Tonight as she goes from country field to locomotive to the city. Throughout the film Mamoulian contrasts the country as sunny, pure, natural, of the earth, with the city as dark night, artificial, sinister.

When Lily arrives at her aunt's shop she undresses, stripping away petticoat after petticoat, symbolizing both the transformation from modest country girl to wanton city woman, and the emergence from the preconscious cocooned girl to the unmasked woman, openly revealing herself. While Lily undresses, her aunt watches voyeuristically. She leaves only when Lily has finished. Mamoulian uses mirrors, as do many filmmakers, to allude to the world of images and reflection, of peering at oneself or others through a reflective medium. This reflexivity extends to the film medium itself, and all artistic media for that matter. Perverse people in particular, in Mamoulian's films, are constantly looking into mirrors. The aunt and the Baron are mirror-gazers, as was Hyde. The aunt, like us, is fascinated by the surprising number of layers Lily has on. And, as before, Mamoulian seeks to titillate through strip-tease.

But the aunt also represents the older generation of urban, corrupt, perverse business people. She is exploitative and hypocritical. Like most old people in Mamoulian's work, she is self-serving, rationalizing her own selfishness as being in the interests of her young charge. She works Lily like a slave and demands that Lily wait on her like a servant while she, the aunt, does nothing but cheat customers and drink on the sly. She makes strict moral demands on Lily but holds none of the same standards for herself. The characterization of the

aunt and of the Baron reflect Mamoulian's own negative perceptions of older benefactors, of his employers.

While the aunt drinks in bed, Lily reads "the Song of Solomon" from the Bible, reflecting her purity and trust. Lily lives in a basement room with a barred window near the ceiling. She is low down in the world and imprisoned. Richard, the artist, lives directly across from her, but in an attic garret, at top level with a large windowed surface opening up to the sky. Yet his window panes are outlined by cross-bar beams. He, like Lily, is also imprisoned, but in a different way. Richard, the artist, is spiritually high up, godlike, yet imprisoned by the impoverishment of his profession and his own emotional shortcomings. She is of the earth. We see this in particular in the scenes between them in the park. Art and nature are contrasted. He creates man-made god-like images of beauty in his studio, while she is of nature's beauty. The scene in the park is shot through filters to soften and idealize the purity of nature with its bright sunlight, ponds, trees and grass. Lily smells the grass and tells Richard, "You've got to bury your nose in the ground." Her very name symbolizes her connection with natural beauty.

When Richard first sees Lily in the bookshop we are shown the image of Lily's dangling leg swinging from the ladder she is perched upon filing away books. The image is nearly identical to that of Ivy's swinging leg in the

first bedroom scene of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This symbol of sexual arousal leads to Richard's offer to Lily to have her model for him. When she first comes to Richard's studio he is very quick and businesslike with her. By contrast, her rhythm is very slow and tentative. The initial stripping scene is prolonged, making for a titillating seduction. The shadowed silhouette of her unrolling the stocking from the leg repeats this signifier of sexuality.

Lily strips for Richard on numerous occasions. Each time we see the artist at work. He works the clay in a very physical way, manipulating the clay body with movements that would be censorable applied to the subject herself. Later on, after Richard has given Lily over to the Baron, he looks at the statue of her which he has created and in voice-over we hear her speak the lines from "The Song of Solomon." At this moment he emerges a fully integrated human being and sets out to get Lily back.

Doors, signifying barriers, are used prominently in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Love Me Tonight, and Song of Songs. Each film shows unusually massive doors protecting a fortress-like world within. In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde they appear ominous. In Love Me Tonight their exaggerated scale is comical, and in Song of Songs they make a double-edged serio-comic impression.

Lily, the mistress of the Baron, has been molded into his creation much as Richard has created an image of her and as the film studios have done to Dietrich. The Baron displays his new creation in a party scene reminiscent of the ones in General Carew's house in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and in the castle in Love Me Tonight. In each of these gatherings those assembled are corpselike, stuffed mannequins. Lily performs a piano recital for the guests and has become in life what she has become in art, a statue, a mannequin. She wears black for her debut.

The other scene out-of-doors, in nature, is with her riding teacher on the grounds of the Baron's estate. This contrasts with the earlier scene in the park with Richard. She is no longer of nature, of love, but wooden, artificial, cynical--no longer in the rhythm of nature. No sunlight shimmers through the trees in these woods.

In her final transformation, as Lily the cabaret entertainer, her movements are as radically different from those of Lily the young girl as they are from Lily the Baron's wife. She is now seductive and sensual, the Dietrich we know from the Von Sternberg films. In the final scene back at Richard's studio, her loss of innocence is complete as we see her smoke a cigarette, a symbol of corruption.³¹

Of the last third of the film, Tom Milne remarks:

The trouble. . . is that it really needs a director with Stroheim's cruelty as well as

Stroheim's tenderness. Wielding the scalpel has never been Mamoulian's forte, and although the sequences after Lily's marriage to the Baron are done with his usual impeccable style, something is lacking. . . . [there is] a basic uncertainty of conception in the film, which never quite makes up its mind whether it is opting for tender lyricism, stringent mockery of human fallibility, or simply melodramatic splendour.³²

The film is all of these things, but in the latter portion of the film Mamoulian does seem to falter over what the film is really about, and the happy ending lacks credibility.

The film ran into considerable difficulty with censors prior to its 1933 release. In a letter dated June 13, 1933, to Russell Holman at Paramount distribution, Will H. Hays complained that contrary to new production code guidelines insisting that each picture be approved by the MPPDA before a final negative is printed, not only was a final shooting script never sent to them for approval, but the completed film was sent directly to the New York Censor Board where it had a better chance of passing to the market untampered with than if it had passed through the MPPDA offices first.

The character of the Baron was originally depicted as much more sadistic than he appears in the released print. Many sexually suggestive lines were objected to, as were the use of passages from the Bible for romantic purposes. Objections were raised to the nudity in the film, in plaster as well as in living form, especially the close-ups of Richard running his hands over the naked

breasts of the statue of Lily. Also criticized were the moral character of Lily and allusions to prostitution along with what was perceived to be the glorification of the lifestyle of a "kept" woman. Lyrics to the song Dietrich sings in the cabaret in the latter part of the film, the famous Friedrich Holländer song, "Johnny," were the subject of strenuous objection due to their sexual suggestiveness.³³

In response to objections voiced against the film Mamoulian wrote a lengthy, conciliatory letter to A.M. Botsford of the MPPDA, who in turn sent the letter on to Dr. Wingate, the man whose approval was needed at the Hays Office. The letter apparently had the effect of getting the film released with minimal cuts, until 1935, when, even trimmed of 1500 feet of objectionable material, request for reissue of the film was denied, and the film was filed away for decades under the rubric: "social problem." But the letter to Botsford deserves reading in its entirety to grasp Mamoulian's considerable rhetorical prowess, as well as his already familiar irrepressible ego.³⁴

Song of Songs was the last in a series of films that Mamoulian made for Paramount Studios. The differences in style between his first film, Applause, and this final Paramount film, Song of Songs, made just a few years later, are enormous. Both subjects are very much in the tradition of nineteenth-century naturalism. And stark

naturalism is the effect Mamoulian achieves in *Applause*. But by the time Mamoulian made *Song of Songs*, he had diminished contact with an external socio-political environment, inescapable to him during those years in New York. Although Sudermann's novel lends itself to an equally naturalistic treatment, Mamoulian places the film in a storybook setting, preferring to not deal with the implicit social concerns of the work, especially the degradation of women, within its immediate social context. Rather, such conflicts are dealt with solely on an interpersonal level, divorced from any recognizable reality.

In his next film, Mamoulian deals with actual historical material and shows just how far he has departed from concern for historical accuracy. The truth he is concerned with is not a social or a political one, but an aesthetic one. Regarding obligation to historical truth in filmmaking, Mamoulian stated, "Whatever you do must serve the theatre or film."³⁵ Certain basic facts must be adhered to, but outside of these only artistic purpose need be of concern. To illustrate his point, he said that the story of Joan of Arc cannot end with her going off with her boyfriend. She must burn. But outside of this, the artist may depart to suit his own purposes.

With *Song of Songs*, the connection between Mamoulian's inner struggles and those he depicts on the screen becomes more tenuous. His work seems less and less

an expression of inner conflicts, making subsequent films more and more detached, more and more devoid of feeling. Technique is applied externally to given material rather than shaped in some integral way to express a point of view. Creating beauty becomes the overriding purpose. This might be seen, in part, as a consequence of Mamoulian's increased success and security. What began as a sequence of career obstacles gave way to a relaxation of constraints. This can be seen in the work, which is increasingly devoid of serious conflict. The edge is gone. What follows are softer, prettier films.

As early as 1928, M. G. M.'s story department was collecting readers' reports on possible sources for a screenplay based on the life of the 17th century Swedish queen, Christina. Plays by Strindberg and Dumas pere were suggested as sources, in large part because these sources could be used free of copyright restrictions. It was another source, the novel, The Sibyl of the North, by Faith Compton MacKenzie, that was adapted early in 1932 by Salka Viertel and Margaret Levine into a script. Early reports on the script marked it as suitable for Garbo or Bankhead. More writers were enlisted for further rewrites. Among them was the writer Beth Meredyth who would contribute to the scripting of Mamoulian's The Mark of Zorro for Twentieth-Century-Fox studios in 1940. Finally, S.N. Behrman was brought in to write dialogue for one of Salka Viertel's script drafts. Many different

treatments by many different writers were sent to Walter Wanger, now an M. G. M. producer, and M. G. M. co-founder Harry Rapf. The final script was by Viertel, Behrman, and H.M. Harwood. Behrman suggested renaming the film "Minerva of the North," but the studio held on to the title Queen Christina. Not until September of 1933 do archive files on Queen Christina indicate any input by Mamoulian. Again, Mamoulian's claim of always beginning each film with a clean slate is not borne out by the evidence.

Legend has it that Greta Garbo, absent almost a year from the screen, selected Mamoulian to direct her next film after being impressed with what he had done with Dietrich in Song of Songs. How much of this is true and how much Mamoulian's entrée into M. G. M., Hollywood's wealthiest studio, had to do, once again for Mamoulian, with the efforts of Walter Wanger, is unclear. The erudite Wanger may have felt Mamoulian's sensibilities would result in the type of picture he, Wanger, wished to produce out of this moment of European history. It may have been at his behest that Garbo viewed Song of Songs, leading to more of a concurrence than an outright suggestion that Mamoulian direct Queen Christina.

Mamoulian would never again produce any of his projects. What he lost in artistic control, he may have made up for in salary by working for M. G. M. In any case, Wanger was a producer who understood and respected

Mamoulian's abilities and need for artistic autonomy. It was Wanger, originally a producer for the Theatre Guild, who had gotten Mamoulian his first film job in both New York and Hollywood. Mamoulian's next major career move, away from Paramount, was also guided by Wanger.

The only other familiar talent to work with Mamoulian on Queen Christina was Sir C. Aubrey Smith, as the Queen's personal manservant, Aage. Smith had played the Duke in Love Me Tonight, and would also perform in Mamoulian's next film, We Live Again, based on Tolstoy's novel Resurrection. Everyone else was new to Mamoulian. The story of Laurence Olivier's losing the part of Antonio, the Queen's Spanish lover, to John Gilbert has been told many times. What was to have been an auspicious American film debut ended up postponed for several years. Olivier screen-tested with Garbo for the part and gave what even Olivier himself years later agreed was a stiff performance. More importantly, he failed to establish the rapport with Garbo needed in order to make the romance between the two characters convincing and truthful. Garbo did not like Olivier. Mamoulian did not like the test results. Enraged, Olivier returned to England. Garbo got John Gilbert to return to the screen in his first sound film to play the part of Antonio. Gilbert was someone with whom she did have a rapport, which later became an extended love affair. The desired results followed.

In spite of what numerous newspaper and magazine feature articles had to say about Mamoulian researching every aspect of Sweden and the Swedish court of the 17th century in order to insure the production's authenticity in details of dress and decor, the film has little to do with providing an accurate historical account of the life of Queen Christina of Sweden. Mainly it provides a vehicle for Miss Garbo to display her talents at eliciting pathos by convincingly portraying romantic suffering, further ennobled by her subtle comedic gifts.

But more is going on in this film than the repetition of a romantic formula. The film's writers make strong statements about issues common to historical dramas as a genre; about conflict between public duty and personal happiness, between following tradition or breaking with it and following one's own judgment, between conflicting values of material pursuit and power over spiritual fulfillment and the general welfare through the civilizing influence of the arts and sciences. Often these issues are broached without subtlety, with artless rhetoric and easy sentiment, but they are there, and alternately Garbo and Mamoulian are able to present them with an honesty and purity that are moving.

Mamoulian's efforts do not focus on these themes so to illuminate the individual, social, and political forces that propel history. Instead, he re-enacts the

issues he finds personally compelling, ostensibly under the mask of history, but actually oblivious to it.

Queen Christina presents the life of the Swedish monarch from the time she assumes the throne as a child upon the death of her father in battle, to her abdication and self-imposed exile from Sweden many years later. We see her struggle to civilize a belligerent and xenophobic nation through liberal social reforms and cultural exchange with other European nations. We see her dedication to the welfare of her nation, all at the expense of personal happiness, and against the wishes of her aged and conservative male advisers.

One day, determined to do as she pleases, she defies authority and leaves the court incognito. At a country inn she crosses paths with the Spanish emissary who, in turn, is on his way to the Swedish court. He carries a marriage proposal for the Queen from the King of Spain. The Queen and the emissary fall in love. She returns to court. He proceeds to court. At court there is a scene of recognition and reversal of position between the two. They resume their romance in secret. But she is forced to choose between personal and public fulfillment. She chooses the former. She abdicates (in a scene which is marred by some directorial choices of false sentimentality) and arranges a rendez-vous with her lover with whom she will live in exile. En route, he is mortally wounded in a duel by a jealous rival suitor at

the Swedish court. Dying, he is brought aboard the ship they were to have sailed away on. Despite his death she decides to continue with her journey.

Within this framework, Mamoulian de-particularizes the history of the piece, removing it from a historical reality to a fantasy world. There, the inherent historical issues are not, as Mamoulian liked to think, so much elevated to a timeless universal level, as reduced to the familiar dialectics of all his works, mainly having to do with what he called the struggle between the animalistic and the spiritual, of going against authority, listening to one's inner voices, and ultimately shedding the mask, psychologically integrating the schizoid personality elements into a fully realized individual identity.

Sexual politics, once again, take center stage. A meta-filmic dimension to his work which first emerged in Love Me Tonight, and took prominence in Song of Songs, takes on even greater prominence in Queen Christina.

Once again, the Mamoulian protagonist is an individual of diverse abilities. She has mastered tasks men would not have ordinarily expected of, or entrusted to, a woman. She loves learning and creative genius. Her judgment and skill at political negotiation are sharpened by her subtle appreciation of Molière, Calderon, and Velasquez. She, like the stage and film director, is the leader of an ensemble who for all of her supreme

authority must contend with others in power and the constraints of convention. An innovator, she encounters resistance to her efforts. She wants to eradicate the exigencies of war, of brutish reality, through art; "art for life's sake."

Her sexual impulses are powerful but hidden, contained, compartmentalized. By assuming a false identity, a mask, she is able to venture into the lower realms of society normally outside of her experience. There, with someone of subservient social standing and ethnicity she explores her sexual being, so forbidden in her identity at the top of the social stratum. Her gender is ambiguous; the masculine and feminine aspects of her identity in constant conflict. Christina refers to herself as a "bachelor."

The film hints at homoerotic feelings between Queen Christina and her lady-in-waiting, Ebba. This is something which earlier script treatments dealt with more openly, but in the final script was dropped. In the scenes at the country inn between Christina disguised as a man and Antonio, a homoerotically charged seduction scene takes up a lengthy period of time in the film. The scene in the bedroom with the two people slowly undressing is the coming together of what has been established earlier as two kindred spirits; people who come from different worlds but have, in the true sense of the word, a platonic bond.

Once Christina unmask her identity as a woman, their love is consummated. The scene of the morning after, which follows, begins with the bedpost draperies drawn, masking our view of the two in bed together. A maidservant comes in to ask how many "chocolates" she should serve and we hear Antonio's voice announce "two." This is the second time that this servant girl contributes to the sexual titillation in the film. She is shown the night before offering herself sexually to either of the "men" as included in the cost of the accommodations. She is a sexually available member of the lower classes. The undressing scene between Christina and Antonio is a climactic one carried out as a truly breathtaking, subtle strip-tease. Mamoulian achieves anticipatory tension here through the use of slow, rhythmic pacing.

The impact of rhythm is felt even more intensely in the famous scene in the bedroom where Christina goes around the room caressing each object. Here, as he often did, he directed the scene by conducting with a baton and a metronome beating out the rhythm. The accompanying musical background has a lilting rhythm akin to a heartbeat's. At this point, Mamoulian gains dramatic effect with an extreme close-up of Garbo's face, a device he has used often, but never to such luminescent effect.

When Christina returns to court, she is told implicitly by her advisers that her sexuality must be

repressed. Sexual feelings are dangerous and have no place in the professional world. Once awakened, she is told, these feelings lead to destruction. Unlike the nightmarish conclusion of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde or the fairy-tale conclusion of Love Me Tonight, or the false resolution to Song of Songs, the attempt to depict a resolution of transcendence at the conclusion of Queen Christina is successful in its quiet restraint and ambiguity. In that famous tabula rasa of Garbo's face, which can be fully appreciated only on a large screen, Mamoulian demonstrates his mastery of the use of the close-up. This shot was technically innovative using heretofore untried multiple lenses to close in fluidly from a great distance to intense proximity.³⁶ In Queen Christina the consequences of following one's inner impulses are no longer seen as wavering between the fear of self-destruction by taking such risks or the kind of fabulous success that he liked to brag about having achieved at all times, but the reality of some ambiguous middle road, with no clear ending to the story. Garbo is largely responsible for bringing this quality to the film's resolution.

Queen Christina is also about the relationship between Garbo and Mamoulian and their relationship to the world. As with Dietrich and her films, an audience going to see Garbo in a film does not go to see the story of Queen Christina re-enacted by Garbo, but to renew a

relationship with Garbo herself as she reveals herself in yet another guise, which is also, simultaneously, her familiar self. In fact, the story of the film may bear more resemblance to Garbo herself than to the historical Queen Christina. Garbo, the bachelor, the Swedish film queen, had a nation of followers whom she labored to please, to give them what they wanted from her. Toward the end of the film, as the mob descended on the royal palace after rioting in the streets protesting her policies, she came forward to address the unruly crowd and said, "You have come just for a glimpse of me?" This is Garbo addressing her followers to whom she devoted her life's work, but who would not let her live her own life as she pleased. Christina had the same problem; no life of her own. The public clamored for her, she was plagued by sycophants. No one was there whom she could trust. Garbo, like Christina, had abdicated her career for a year to assert her independence and privacy and please herself, as she ended up doing permanently a few years after this film.

The idea of following one's "voices" was important to Mamoulian and he, too, ultimately chose abdication over giving in to conventional wisdom. The price for turning one's back on what others dictate and doing things one's own way is ultimately relinquishing the means to work at all. In this sense, the film was precious for both Garbo and Mamoulian. And, like

Christina and Antonio, Garbo and Mamoulian snuck away from Hollywood for a three-day tryst together, incognito, in Arizona where they would not be hounded by the public. In Mamoulian, Garbo found an emissary from the world of European culture amidst the intellectual wasteland of Hollywood, much as Christina had found in Antonio. Here were the two bachelors, the two kindred spirits, finding one another. When the press got word of the trip, the two were deluged by the news media and the newspapers were full of headlines about the two eloping together, with Mamoulian repeatedly referred to as "Mr. Garbo." Whatever transpired and any plans that were made were dashed once the public intruded on their privacy. Garbo returned to Hollywood, and Mamoulian went to New York. They ended up playing out the film's scenario in striking similarity.

Another contemporaneous element the film alludes to is the issue Wexman raises in regard to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, drawing on Foucault; that is, the political content of race and gender. This film, like much of Mamoulian's work, depicts the struggle of a woman against male control and oppression. Women are sympathetic characters who must suppress their will to self-assertion and self-expression, particularly in the areas of vocation and sexuality. They are dependent on, and powerless against the dictates of, the male-dominated culture. This was a struggle Mamoulian experienced firsthand growing up with a talented and frustrated mother.

In the larger political picture, the xenophobia of the Swedish people depicted in the film is very much about the xenophobia in America in the early 1930s, with its isolationist, protectionist mentality. In Southern California, the influx of Hispanics aroused a resentment that would grow as the 1930s continued, culminating in a series of race riots in the 1940s. When Queen Christina welcomes the Spanish emissaries and attempts to open Sweden to more southerly cultural influences, her guests are warned that Sweden's "climate [is] not suited to foreigners." Garbo, Mamoulian, and screenwriter Viertel were foreigners, as were many of the film industry's creative personnel, and this sentiment reflected not only prevailing attitudes toward Latin peoples and their foreign ways, particularly what was perceived to be their more open sexuality, but the country's suspicion about the film industry run by foreigners, and in need of controlling its all too free sexual behavior. The year Queen Christina was released was the year severe tightening of censorship by the Hays Office began, and what would become the virtual banning of every film Mamoulian had made to date.

By August 1933, the Office's James Wingate, who reviewed the final cut and script of each film for release, wrote to E. J. Mannix, one of the M. G. M. studio heads of his concern over the inn sequence in Queen Christina because of recent waves of criticism

against the film industry's "immorality" and "lack of conventions."³⁷ By January of 1934, Louis B. Mayer, head of M. G. M., received a letter from Joseph L. Breen of the Hays Office, which was then passed on to E. J. Mannix, stating:

The specific violation comes in the sequence in which it is definitely established that Garbo and Gilbert sleep together in the Inn. Sexual immorality is here presented as "attractive and beautiful" and is made to appear "right and permissible", and thus comes the definite Code violation. In the discharge of our responsibility under the Production Code and the Resolution for Uniform Interpretation, we respectfully suggest that, beginning with the scene in which the chambermaid seeks to unloosen Garbo's boots, down to the scene in which Garbo is discovered munching grapes in front of the fireplace, you delete all the intervening scenes, action and dialogue which are played in the bedroom. This means that all the business of undressing and the dialogue which accompanies it; and the entire sequence of the servant inquiring about the chocolate, should be deleted. The action which has Miss Garbo wandering about the room caressing the furniture, the bed, the wall, etc. should be curtailed. We feel we should insist especially that Miss Garbo in this scene keep away entirely from the bed. . . delete this business of Garbo lying across the bed and fondling the pillow. We also feel that the following dialogue between Garbo and Gilbert should be deleted: Christina's lines, "This is how the Lord must have felt when he first beheld the finished world--with all his creatures breathing--living--. . . ." ³⁸

Many other objections to sexual or religious references caused censorship problems for the film and resulted in different editions being marketed to different geographical regions.

Mamouljian's troubles came not only from the censors, as they had on each of his films, but also from his customary adversaries, producers and powerful star performers. Although Wanger supported Mamouljian, Mayer

did not always. Mamoulian was told by Louis B. Mayer that the ending of the film had to be changed, that it was too depressing. Mayer wanted John Gilbert's character, Antonio, to live at the end. In defense of the film's ending, Mamoulian proceeded to lecture Mayer on the nature of tragedy and how it works. No doubt Mayer took offense to Mamoulian's superior tone, as did most of the studio heads who employed him. Mamoulian never worked for Mayer again.³⁹

Mamoulian recalled many times his initial difficulties with Garbo in the filming of Queen Christina. In addition to the many anecdotes about how he shot various scenes with her; getting her to laugh naturally on screen, achieving the sphinx-like expressions in her close-ups, how she was an intuitive rather than an intellectual actress like Dietrich, and therefore needed to be directed through poetic imagery, metaphor, and analogy rather than having everything explained with concrete precision as Dietrich needed, Mamoulian gave special emphasis to the anecdote of their moments of power-struggle.

On the first day of filming, Mamoulian wanted to rehearse a particular scene and true to rumor, Garbo informed him that she never rehearsed, that it made her stale. He reminded her that he was the director and that that was how he worked, having come from the theatre. Then he made a bargain with her: if he didn't like the

first take she would rehearse and reshoot until he was satisfied. It would then be her choice after seeing the daily rushes whether to print the first take or the last one. This they did, and she conceded that he was right.

He stated that from that day on she never gave him any trouble, except once. In this instance, she informed him that when she performed an intimate love scene she had to have a closed set, with only the other actor and the cameraman present. She asked Mamoulian to leave and he, naturally, informed her that he, as director, had no intention of leaving and managed again to have his way with a co-worker more powerful than he, thereby once more reinforcing the wisdom of Grandma Kate.

He may have gotten his way in this power-struggle, but the performances in Queen Christina are often wooden and lifeless. Most of the dialogue is shot with actors seeming to have no inner life or outer tasks to occupy them other than to wait for the next line. No longer does the dialogue provide merely the stress marks to the visual imagery, it takes over. The film is highly rhetorical. Mamoulian, whose Applause broke new ground by turning "talkies" back into movies had made a "talkie." Mamoulian's next film suffered even more from this problem.

In 1934, Samuel Goldwyn assembled what must, at the time, have seemed like an unbeatable combination of talents to raise his prestige to that of a Mayer or a

Zukor. Goldwyn had recently imported, from Berlin, a Ukrainian actress named Ana Sten. Goldwyn hoped for a star to rival Hollywood's reigning European female stars, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. Sten seemed to combine qualities and appearance of the other two. Goldwyn tried to find suitable material for Sten. He first starred her in a film adaptation of Zola's novel, Nana. But the film failed both artistically and commercially. Tolstoy's novel, Resurrection contained the requisite plot elements to make for box-office appeal: a romantic love story between two physically appealing young adults, class struggle, betrayal, and retribution. The Russian novel would provide the perfect vehicle for Sten. Goldwyn managed to convince Fredric March to co-star in the film, despite his reluctance to appear in another historical drama. Goldwyn hired playwrights Maxwell Anderson, Preston Sturges, and Leonard Praskins to adapt the novel for the screen. He hired Gregg Toland, cinematographer of Citizen Kane seven years later, to film the story. Russian set-designer Sergei Sudeikin was production designer, and Alfred Newman composed the musical score. (Mamoulian would work with Newman on three more films: The Gay Desperado, The Mark of Zorro, and Blood and Sand.) Who else but Rouben Mamoulian, the Russian director, the only director to have directed both Dietrich and Garbo, would be as well suited to direct this film?

Though he aspired to making quality films, Goldwyn was not a producer of the sensibility of a Walter Wanger. Unlike Wanger, he could not trust a director like Mamoulian to take full charge, or credit. In Goldwyn, Mamoulian was up against an ego to match his own. Mamoulian, now at the height of his career was, to Goldwyn, the unmistakable choice for this project. Mamoulian was able to work again with Fredric March who had given him his greatest success with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In his ensemble of players, he was able once again to work with Sir C. Aubrey Smith, and Ethel Griffies as Aunt Marie, who repeated the almost identical comical role she had played as the aunt in Love Me Tonight. Mamoulian's association with Maxwell Anderson would take on importance in the nineteen forties and fifties. In 1935, Mamoulian would work with Sudeikin again on Broadway as his set-designer for Porgy and Bess. Mamoulian would meet with Goldwyn one more time in his career, two decades later, with each man dealing a death blow to the other over the filming of Porgy and Bess in 1958.

The story of We Live Again, as Resurrection was retitled, has similarities to the life of Mamoulian's sister Svetlana, the innocent provincial girl who is taken by a young military officer to be his lover, and bears his child, unbeknownst to him, after he has abandoned her. This situation leads step-by-step to her

downfall. The story also bears great similarity to that of Song of Songs.

Mamoulian was able to draw upon childhood experiences to create the world of turn-of-the-century Russia. The male protagonist is a young political idealist, the son of an officer, who goes into the military and then into the civil service, loses his idealism, and through the expiation of his sins against the young girl he abandoned, regains his idealism and his soul. The young man's sexual awakening finds expression in pure love. Once conditioned by environmental forces, however, the hero, Dmitri, takes on the cruel behavior of the society around him. The young girl, Katusha, too, is pure at the start, but once abused, finds herself victim to class and sexual oppression. Eventually, both transcend the oppressive environment and reach a higher, spiritual plane of existence.

The Tolstoian philosophy is consistent with Mamoulian's own. The Jekyll-and-Hyde aspects of Dmitri, the Svetlana-like plight of Katusha, the Russian setting, the dialectic between nature and civilization, between young and old, male and female, animalistic and spiritual, and between upper and lower classes was all there for Mamoulian.

Yet the film is mannered and lifeless. The opening sequence in the film depicting peasants at work in the fields is reminiscent of the Eisensteinian socialist-

realist films of the period from the Soviet Union. This opening is clearly decoration as Mamoulian never returns to its images or examines in any way the realities of peasant life as Tolstoy did. The one brief scene later on in the film in the prison where the political prisoner Simonson, played by Sam Jaffe, makes a speech about social conditions in Russia seems gratuitous and meaningless. Tolstoy takes great pains to examine the social realities which create the web in which all of the characters are caught. Mamoulian all but ignores this foundation, so when a glimpse of it is thrown in, it seems absurd because it has not been developed. Instead, he gets caught up in heavy-handed symbolism. For example, after Dmitri has left Katusha pregnant, we see images of ripe fruit, newborn cows, and a wounded lamb. Scenes in a Russian Orthodox church offer beautiful spectacle but lack meaning. The musical score for the film is Hollywood melodramatic at its worst. Mamoulian uses flashback dissolves and voice-overs in this film but they call attention to themselves as nothing more than cinematic tricks. The film almost looks as if a student of Mamoulian's had studied all of his techniques and then tried to reproduce them in this film but without the understanding and artistry to make them serve the material. The film failed at the box-office and suffered at the hands of critics. Goldwyn discharged Mamoulian

from any further service and, after one more picture, also discharged Sten, his great discovery.

Almost immediately following the November release of We Live Again, one of Hollywood's smaller studios, the new Pioneer Pictures, devoted to the pioneering of color filmmaking, was filming what would become the first live feature film ever made using the newly developed three-color technicolor process.⁴⁰ The film's director, Lowell Sherman, died three days into the filming. Mamoulian was asked to complete the film, but accepted only on condition that he start from scratch. He had the sets and costumes redesigned to suit his purposes. In January 1934, Becky Sharp, based on Thackeray's novel Vanity Fair, resumed production with Rouben Mamoulian as director. That he was able to command such total control after the already considerable sums spent on a film utilizing an expensive new technology by a studio with comparatively little money, is not only a reflection of Mamoulian's success and power as a director in Hollywood after only a few years of filmmaking, but may also have had something to do with the film's producer, Kenneth Macgowan. Macgowan had produced Mamoulian's unsuccessful 1928 stage production, These Modern Women, whose cast included Alan Mowbray, one of Becky Sharp's leading actors. As with his contact with Wanger, Mamoulian's connection with Macgowan may have linked him to the project. Many notable British character-actors were also

cast in the film, including Cedric Hardwicke, Nigel Bruce, Alison Skipworth, and Doris Lloyd. Lloyd was the actress with whom Mamoulian had fought so bitterly years earlier in his 1922 London debut, The Beating at the Door. Robert Edmond Jones was production designer, and to the production design Mamoulian devoted most of his attention.

Mamoulian was fascinated by color. There were many skeptics inside and outside the film industry. Many thought color never would amount to more than a passing fad. Mamoulian compared its critics to those who had said the same about talking pictures. He saw in the color process another opportunity for innovations that would set a standard for a new technology, thereby winning him yet another place in film history. His interest lay in choosing color for psychological effect rather than mere realistic reproduction or decorative dividends. Mamoulian loved painting. He studied it prodigiously. With the advent of color processing, particularly technicolor processing with its nonrealistic, supersaturated color, Mamoulian could approach the film medium like a painter with his palette. He achieved spectacular effect with color in Becky Sharp, as he did in his other color films: Blood and Sand, Summer Holiday, Silk Stockings, and from all accounts what promised to be equally painterly, had he completed it, Cleopatra.⁴¹

The attention paid to visual splendor in these films is both their strength and their weakness. So much attention was paid to painterly effect that almost every other element suffers. Probably because of the cumbersome equipment required in early technicolor, Becky Sharp has many static passages, uncharacteristic of his filmmaking.

With Becky Sharp, Mamoulian, once again, had an opportunity to break with industry precedent and initiate a major technical innovation, establishing a new standard in the film medium. He could only claim credit as an innovator if he was not made to share artistic control over any aspect of the project. Mamoulian fought bitterly with the film's Technicolor director, Natalie Kalmus, who would also serve on Blood and Sand and Summer Holiday. Robert Edmond Jones was another formidable player in the visual creation of Becky Sharp.

From his work on Becky Sharp, Mamoulian published several articles about the use of color in film for psychological impact. Critics and film historians generally refer to the same moments in the film when discussing Mamoulian's contribution to color filmmaking:

The most celebrated example is also the most obvious: the Duchess of Richmond's great ball on the eve of Waterloo, when the blues, greens and yellows are gradually drained away to leave the screen suffused by a crescendo of red.⁴²

Every nuance of costume and decor was carefully chosen, the result being

. . . a strikingly beautiful film, using color as delicately as Wedgewood china. . . .⁴³

In its subject matter, Becky Sharp is thematically consistent with Mamoulian's other work. It concerns an ambitious young woman determined to live her life by her own rules, eschewing all bourgeois decorum. The rules of society are stifling for her, as a woman, placing great limitation on how she may lead her life, so she dons the mask of propriety as a means of manipulating this system, freeing herself from its restrictions. She, like all other Mamoulian heroes, is two-faced. Like so many other Mamoulian characters, at one point in her adventures, she takes up a career on the stage. She is an opportunist incapable of living for anyone but herself. We cheer her ability to turn the tables on the hypocrisies of society in reversal after reversal of fate. But equally consistent with other Mamoulian heroes, this Faustian heroine pays for her successes by a sacrifice of the soul. In overcoming society's rules, she breaks all barriers and adheres to no moral order. Whatever contributes to personal survival takes precedence. She is the modern parvenue capitalist, the ultimate narcissist.

Unfortunately, this film takes no moral point of view about Becky. Mamoulian seems unsure of whether or not he wants us to like this character. The performance given by Miriam Hopkins as Becky is so grating as to arouse more annoyance than troubled admiration for this heroic egoist. The film suffers from what it should be

exposing, the emptiness of a contemporary society preoccupied with appearances and getting ahead.

Many Critics see Becky Sharp as Mamoulian's last significant film, with the remaining films reflecting what Andrew Sarris called "the innovator who ran out of innovations."⁴⁴ It would be accurate to say that after Becky Sharp, Mamoulian's films no longer advanced the film medium and therefore can no longer be considered "art" films. But just as the problem of formalism already emerges in We Live Again and continues in Becky Sharp, so too are there artistically satisfying films of complexity and wit to follow Becky Sharp, particularly The Gay Desperado.

Chapter 7: THE HOLLYWOOD YEARS: THE LATE THIRTIES

During the filming of Becky Sharp, the Theatre Guild approached Mamoulian about directing its opening production of the 1935-36 season, George Gershwin's long awaited operatic version of DuBose and Dorothy Heyward's play Porgy. During his years in Hollywood, Mamoulian had maintained contact with Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn of the Theatre Guild. They regularly sent him scripts, sometimes for consideration as director, others for critical reaction. He, in turn, regularly wrote back keeping them abreast of his professional activities and apologizing for his tardiness in returning the scripts. In his letters he expressed a desire to return to the New York stage--but only for an acceptable script and if he had time between films. Just how sincere he was is unclear.

Even before Heyward's play Porgy was produced in 1927, Gershwin had decided to write an opera based on the novel. But other projects had intervened. So it wasn't until 1933, that Gershwin finally began work on his opera Porgy and Bess.

Al Jolson wanted the part of Porgy in the opera just as he had wanted it in the play. But again, the Theatre

Guild stood firm in its decision not to cast white actors in blackface. Gershwin began composing in earnest around the same time Jolson approached Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern to write a musical for him based on Porgy.

By the spring of 1935, the Theatre Guild had begun assembling the talent for Porgy and Bess. Alexander Smallens hired early as conductor would assist in casting and in advising Gershwin about the score as it progressed. Both men wanted trained operatic singers instead of Broadway show performers. Todd Duncan and Anne Brown were cast in the title roles after hundreds of singers had been auditioned. Alexander Steinert was hired as musical coach and Eva Jessye and her choir were brought into the production early in the preparations. Oddly, the Theatre Guild's first choice for director was not Mamoulian, but John Houseman. Houseman turned the Guild down. Yet Gershwin was enthusiastic about offering the job to Mamoulian and spent many months trying to get a contractual agreement with Mamoulian to direct the opera. In spite of Mamoulian's attachment to the play, he was not initially won over by the idea of an opera based on it. Only after hearing the score played on the piano for him by the Gershwins at their Manhattan apartment did he agree to the project. He was also at the height of his film career then and used to demanding high salaries for his services. It was beyond anything the theatre could offer. For six months, Mamoulian argued with the Guild

management over his contract.¹ A letter dated March 7, 1935, details disagreements over pay already in progress. It may have been that if he were to return to the Theatre Guild after being virtually thrown out five years earlier, it would be on his terms. Mamoulian requested payment of two percent of box-office receipts per week over seven thousand dollars, plus a salary of five hundred dollars per week. The Guild's business manager, Warren P. Munsell, tried to explain why operating costs would not allow him to be paid more than one percent of weekly box-office receipts over eight thousand dollars.

The production was, in fact, enormously expensive to mount. Gershwin and Smallens demanded, and got, the Guild to pay for a forty-four-piece orchestra, more than double the customary number of instrumentalists in a Broadway pit orchestra at the time. The production also included a huge cast and an elaborate set by Sergei Sudeikin, greatly expanded from Cleon Throckmorton's 1927 set. As a result, the production, for all its historical significance, closed in New York after only 124 performances, at a financial loss. The numbers didn't add up even when the theatre was full.

Mamoulian made it clear that if he accepted the job he wanted to have as little pre-production work as possible. Gershwin, Smallens, and the Guild did everything they could to reduce Mamoulian's chores. He also made it clear that if there were any conceptual

disagreements over the production and things did not go as he dictated, he would leave the show. Gershwin, who was equally used to getting his way acquiesced in the numerous cuts in the opera demanded by Mamoulian, in large part, because Gershwin respected Mamoulian, but no doubt also because he feared Mamoulian would walk out if he did not cooperate.

The matter of cuts to Gershwin's original score is the subject of much scholarly debate, with some writers condemning the cuts and others supporting them.² Musicologist Charles Hamm, amongst others, strongly supports the cuts on the basis of dramaturgical consistency and expediency. He argues that the cuts not only trim the score to a manageable performance length, but actually serve to strengthen the integrity of the musical score which in its original form was never meant to be a finished product but only a working rough draft. He also mentions an opposing view of the cuts by Wilfrid Mellers from Music in a New Land:

Wilfrid Mellers' analysis of Porgy and Bess as "[an] opera about the impact of the world of commerce on those who once led, would like to have led, may still lead, the 'good life,' based on a close relationship between man and nature". . . is an ambitious and interesting attempt to deal with "form, flow, and dramatic function" of the piece. He sees it as "a parable about alienation, oppression, and the inviolability of a radical innocence of spirit, even in a corrupt world". . . and some sections cut from the Theatre Guild production figure prominently in this parable. The opening Jazzbo Brown scene, coming after the orchestral introduction has evoked a "Negro Eden," contrasts the piano's "tawdry sophistication of Tin Pan Alley chromatics" with the "primitive pentatonic"

nature of the chorus. Thus Gershwin, at the beginning of his opera, contrasts "the two worlds of the folk community and of New York'. . . . The elimination of Porgy's "Buzzard Song" would be unthinkable, according to Mellers' analysis, because it is the turning point of the opera, for it forces [Porgy] to face up to reality and suffering. The anguished appoggiaturas, the strained, gawky leaps and flapping-winged chromatics are darker in character than any music we have heard previously, since the anguish is now that of a personal experience--of growing up--and is not, like the dirges, a communal lamentation. The appearance of the buzzard marks Porgy's realization of the significance of his love; and although conflict is manifest in the rondo structure, the song turns into a victory for love-life over death. . . . "³

Of all the cuts Mamoulian had Gershwin make, these two: the extended overture and the "Buzzard Song," were the most painful for Gershwin. Mamoulian felt that the jazz piano in the overture sounded too much like Harlem. Opening the opera with "Summertime," he said, would create more of a languid, southern feeling.⁴ He felt that the "Buzzard Song," like many other passages he deleted, held up the dramatic action and was superfluous writing. He also objected to this particular song because he said Gershwin, who grew up in a household of Russian Jewish parents, had subconsciously plagiarized the melody from Rimsky-Korsakoff's opera Sadko.

The opera was over four hours long in tryout performances, with almost one-half hour of performance time taken up with set changes. Mamoulian felt he needed to make cuts in order to keep the audience from leaving. This, in spite of the highly favorable preview reception the opera received in Boston. Mamoulian admitted to

having cut a number of other passages in the opera that he was simply unable to stage. But Mellers' point is well taken. Not only is it consistent with the points made about Porgy in Chapter 4, but it also points to a deeper explanation; with these cuts Mamoulian was able to keep the Quixotic Porgy forever dreaming, safely distanced from any suffering or awareness. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was the only film in which Mamoulian was willing to deal honestly with inner feelings, making them neither heroic nor comic. By the time he made We Live Again, his ability to face the pain of human experience in his work seems to have left him.

Most of the critical discussion over Porgy and Bess at the time of its New York opening (October 10, 1935) centered on the irrelevant discussion of whether the piece was an opera or a musical. For Mamoulian there was never any question; it was an opera. He never suggested deleting the recitatives in favor of spoken dialogue, as Cheryl Crawford did in her commercially successful Broadway revival in 1941. Mamoulian had repeated and expanded on much of his 1927 staging, especially the saucer funeral and the symphony of noises. He also resumed addressing his black cast as his "children." Critics praised his contribution, as they had in 1927, but most of the discussion this time focussed on Gershwin.⁵

Mamoulian's next project was to have been a film version of Faust for Jesse Lasky. But Lasky had been forced to resign from Paramount under accusations by its Board of Directors that his disregard for budgetary constraints had led to the company's financial ruin. Paramount, by the mid-nineteen thirties had been hit hard by the Depression, and Lasky cared little for the final cost of the films he produced as long as the product was something of aesthetic value. Adolph Zukor's son, Eugene, said of Lasky:

Lasky was a dreamer. . . . He was as far removed from Wall Street and what was going on there as one could be. The world was a beautiful place in which to paint pictures. . . . He loved to be with writers and creators. And the money? So what! Even the budgeting--he said, "Well, it's true it's too much, but it isn't too much if you get what you want for it."⁶

Lasky formed a brief partnership with Mary Pickford to create Pickford-Lasky Productions. The company was a producing subsidiary of United Artists, the independent distribution company Pickford had co-founded with Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin. Faust seemed an almost inevitable choice for Mamoulian, and Lasky an ideal producer. But Mamoulian had already done his Faust picture--Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. And since Faustian themes pervade most of his work, there was no need to approach the subject directly.

Instead, he took a project that, at the outset, seemed dubious. But once again he turned this dubious project into a tour de force. Perhaps after Porgy and

Bess and the attention it brought Gershwin, Mamoulian needed a project where his contribution would be paramount, or perhaps he needed some comic relief.

Leo Birinski, who had co-written the screenplay of Song of Songs wrote a musical parody of opera singers, young lovers, gangsters, and Mexican bandits called The Gay Desperado. Mamoulian turned what seemed like slight, formulaic material into a witty, fast-paced, and very stylish film, garnering the New York Film Critics Award for Best Film of 1936.

The film opens with another coup de théâtre. We see footage of a typical gangster film of the early 1930's, very similar to Mamoulian's own City Streets. After a few minutes, the film slows down to a halt, revealing the gangster film not to be the opening of the film we have come to see at all, but a film being watched by a large group of Mexicans in a local movie theatre south of the border. When the film projector unexpectedly malfunctions, the audience goes wild, yelling at the screen, at the projectionist, and at one another. Here we have the perfect set-up for a spoof of Hollywood film genres and conventions.

In The Gay Desperado, Mamoulian has no technical innovations to offer. The only way he can challenge conventional filmmaking is by satirizing it.

The plot concerns a group of inept Mexican bandits who decide to improve their criminal methods by watching

American gangster films. They abduct an operatic tenor and hold him for ransom. And when a young couple driving through the desert happen upon the bandits they, too, are taken hostage. As the plot unfolds, abounding in farcical quid pro quos, reversals, and recognitions, Mamoulian's cinematographer, Lucien Andriot, captures the southwestern landscape with as much majesty as anything photographed by Ansel Adams. As in his other films, Mamoulian once again uses shadow-play for effect. Here, at the bandits camp, the men are gathered around a campfire. The fire light casts huge shadows on the wall as well as emphasizing the large circle of white sombreros.

Nino Martini plays the singer⁷; Ida Lupino, the young woman traveler kept hostage. And, like all Mamoulian heroines, she is independent and defiant. The film has the characteristic Mamoulian strip-teases and sexual innuendo. Two attempted rape scenes are played beautifully for comic effect and sexual titillation. For example, when the abducted couple is brought to the room where they will be confined, the bandit Braganza smooths the coverlet of the bed in a sexually suggestive way. Ida Lupino's character, Jane, freed of social context, discards her own sexual inhibitions and discards her fiancé in favor of her captors. Her encounters with Braganza are reminiscent of Virginia Mamoulian's account

of her own kidnapping by bandits in the Caucasus almost thirty years earlier.

The censors objected to the film's innuendo, its depiction of law enforcement authorities as inept, and to what they perceived as its overall amoral tone. Banditry, they concluded, is depicted as honorable or acceptable. They also found the film brutal and violent. Lines like "I oughta torture you. . . . tear your tongue out!" were considered, at the time, too violent.⁸ Then, too, there was the concern about an offensive stereotypic depiction of Mexicans, a concern which figured largely in M. G. M.'s decision not to remake the film in 1950.

Finally, the MPPDA objected to the film's implication that audience members could learn criminal behavior from watching movies. But, despite these strong objections, the film passed with edits allowed for certain markets like Ohio, and left intact, as usual, for New York.

Mamouljian's most physically demanding directorial experience came in the first five months of 1937, when he was directing High, Wide and Handsome on location in Chino, California. The film had a large cast that included a circus company, animals and all. The production was beset by torrential rains, mudslides, equipment malfunctions, and a catastrophic accident that killed and injured a number of performers and crew.

High, Wide and Handsome both draws upon an earlier operetta tradition and prefigures Mamoulian's innovations in Oklahoma! Just as he had experience prior to Oklahoma! working with Richard Rodgers on Love Me Tonight, he had his first working experience with Oscar Hammerstein 2nd on High, Wide and Handsome. The film resembles Oklahoma! in both its subject matter and style. Both are romantic dramas with populist political sentiments reinforcing traditional American values. Hard work and individualism, as well as the danger of the mob and the need for community solidarity are the messages here. The overall effect is the creation of a romanticized America where life is uncomplicated, orderly, and moral choices clear. Milne succinctly states:

The story, an original by Oscar Hammerstein II, concerns the true history of the discovery of the Pennsylvania oilfields in 1859, and the epic struggle waged by the poor farmer-prospectors against the railroad freight tycoons who resorted to every means in their power, financial and physical, to prevent the completion of the pipelines which would bring oil to every home in America.⁹

The opening shot is an extreme close-up of Irene Dunne singing the title song as Sally Watterson. Dunne is playing a Jeanette MacDonald-like singing heroine. Sally, a sexually free woman leading an unconventional lifestyle, performs in a traveling medicine show. As an entertainer she is morally suspect by most family-oriented townspeople. The power of the elixir she sells is an illusion. Midway through her performance, the makeshift stage and connecting wagon catch fire and are

destroyed in a spectacular fire. The outsiders have been ousted. Sally and her father are taken in by a handsome young farmer-inventor, Peter Cortlandt, (Randolph Scott) and his grandmother, (Elizabeth Patterson). In the Cortlandt house, Sally wakes up the next morning in an idyllic country setting. Her bedroom is as pure and simple as the country inn in Queen Christina or Katusha's bedroom in We Live Again. Sally begins her new life in the bathtub, figuratively washing away the sinful ways of her past. But as wholesome as the scene is, Mamoulian cleverly undercuts it with sexual titillation--Sally is nude (cleverness not lost on the censors).

Peter discovers fuel oil in Pennsylvania rock. He develops technology to extract the oil. Peter and Sally marry. And as they dream about their future home in the song, "The Folks Who Live on the Hill," Peter's oil derrick erupts spewing forth a geyser covering her with his oil. What follows is the farmers' struggle to stave off the evil railroad barons' attempts to control this oil harvest. For a farmer, Peter has a noble bearing. He is spiritually pure. The evil railroad baron, like the Baron in Song of Songs or Hyde himself, is physically grotesque and embodies the evil and corruption of big business. Peter describes these men as, "a few men stealin' what belongs to everyone," to which his friend Brennan replies, "That's a pretty good definition of

business." Peter is another utopian visionary fighting the corrupt system.

The film comments on both the encroaching worldwide totalitarianism and the undeclared war between labor and management in Hollywood that Mamoulian was in the midst of at the time he made this film. Here again, external politics force the individual to make moral choices--to sell out to the evil bosses or listen to one's voices and face possible defeat. Like Queen Christina, the young innovative genius must choose between his life work or his personal happiness and marriage. When Peter's professional struggle becomes all-consuming, Sally leaves him. In no time she becomes a renowned circus performer reaching ever new and unexpected heights of success. As a neglected wife, she found her former life of independence and fulfillment on stage more satisfying than her pet-like existence at home.

The threat of totalitarian control comes not only from the business tycoons, but from the bottom of society as well. Religious zealots incite the mob to violence against anyone who threatens their narrow, sexually-repressed lifestyle.

In the end, politics fails, religion fails, economics fails. What saves this world is art; art for life's sake. The deus ex machina conclusion to the film comes when, at the seeming moment of defeat at the hands of the railroad barons, Sally's circus company races to

the scene to complete the pipeline and meet an impossible deadline that will mean success for the farmers.

Beautifully photographed by Love Me Tonight and Song of Songs cinematographer Victor Milner, especially the magical nighttime scene of the circus performance, the film, although nearly two hours long, never stops moving. It is marred, however, by haste, much the same as We Live Again. Mamoulian never takes the time to develop interior moments. What is there lacks credibility. True to the often-voiced criticism about Mamoulian's work, this film is most successful at its moments of greatest spectacle. Otherwise it comes across as simplistic and sentimental.

The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America passed the film for general distribution but voiced objections to the bathtub scene. They felt the nudity was excessive. They also objected to the noncritical depiction of women as prostitutes (especially the Dorothy Lamour character, Molly) as well as the depiction of brutality to animals. The film was banned in Germany because of its "Non-Aryan" director. Reviews were generally favorable if not enthusiastic. Commercially, the film did poorly, especially for its high production cost, and has since slid into virtual oblivion.

For his last film at Paramount, Mamoulian received \$178,000, the highest salary of his career. The money was paid on a weekly basis of \$7,500, an extremely high salary for 1937, and not an inconsiderable sum today. By

contrast, Mamoulian's assistant director, the individual responsible for staging large groups, and his unit managers, the individuals responsible for managing operating expenses on a film, each received \$150 per week on High, Wide and Handsome. Wages and working conditions on this film became the subject of much public discussion in the months immediately preceding and following its October 1937 release.

The mid-1930's were turbulent years in the history of the film industry, which like the nation as a whole, was moving toward labor unionization. The struggle for power was often violent. Mamoulian, who sympathized with workers' demands for better conditions and pay, nonetheless continually violated rules, working long hours and keeping actors and technicians waiting needlessly while he devoted long periods of time to minutiae or long-winded lectures. From a producer's and unit manager's standpoint, Mamoulian repeatedly went over budget and over time allotted for making a film. On many films, he was noted on studio schedules for excessive lateness and absence.

Until the thirties, Hollywood operated under the "sweetheart" union of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. This "academy," started in 1927 by Louis B. Mayer, was meant to stem the union movement. The Academy included representatives of every division in the film industry, which at this time, contended with the Great

Depression and competition from radio. The major studio heads took advantage of President Roosevelt's declaration of a bank holiday in March 1933, to announce across-the-board pay cuts of between twenty and fifty percent for all workers. They claimed it was the only way they could meet their payrolls. This led to mass disaffection from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the beginnings of the Hollywood craft unions.

The only pre-existing union, the technicians union, IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees), struck to protest the wage cuts. The strike paved the way for the formation of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) in 1933 and the Screen Writers Guild (SWG) in 1934. The formation of unions, did not, however, lead automatically to their acceptance as bargaining agents. On July 5, 1935, President Roosevelt signed the Wagner Act into law, establishing the National Labor Relations Board which required employers to bargain in good faith with unions they had formally recognized. The studios were forced to reckon with the unions. By November 1935, Paramount had issued an edict "informing its contract directors that they would have to accept pictures as assigned or have their contracts cancelled."¹⁰

On December 23, 1935, director King Vidor organized a secret meeting of twelve prominent film directors at his home in Beverly Hills. Those present included Frank Borzage, Howard Hawks, Henry King, Rowland V. Lee, Lewis

Milestone, A. Edward Sutherland, Frank Tuttle, William Wellman, and by most accounts, Rouben Mamoulian.¹⁰

Although those present, and most of those who would form the membership of the Screen Directors Guild, were not in need of minimum wage regulations, they were particularly concerned over the issue of control over their work. In less than one month's time, the Screen Directors Guild was legally incorporated. Most of the following year was spent wooing new members. Many were fearful of blacklisting by the studios; others, like Cecil B. DeMille, were passionately opposed to what they considered to be communist control of organized labor. Nevertheless, many did join the new Guild.

The Guild's first Board of Directors in 1936 included all of those present at King Vidor's house on December 23rd, plus William K. Howard, John Ford, Clarence Brown (who soon after resigned), John Cromwell, Wesley Ruggles, Gregory LaCava, Phil Rosen, Bruce Humsterstone (who also resigned soon after), Richard Wallace, Frank Capra, William Keighley, J. Walter Ruben, George Stevens, and Tay Garnett. Vidor served as the SDG's first president. This board remained in place until May 1938, and subsequently each year a new board was elected. Each senior member of the Guild was asked to nominate fifteen directors to serve. Those with the highest number of nominations were seated on the board. Mamoulian served from 1936 until 1939, when Frank Capra

took over as SDG President. Mamouljian was off the board until 1944, when he served two years. His name does not reappear as a Guild board member again until 1952 when it is listed only as an alternate.

No doubt Mamouljian's friendship with King Vidor was a significant factor in Mamouljian's initial association with the Screen Directors Guild. Once Vidor ceased to be Guild President, Mamouljian's name disappears from the board's roster. It resurfaces during most of the 1950's as first Vice-President under another friend, George Sidney. Mamouljian was not well-liked by most of Hollywood's directors. Few were counted amongst friends. In particular, he and Capra were less than friendly for many years. In fact, Mamouljian's name disappears from the board roster during Capra's most influential years at the Guild. Strained relations between the two men can be traced to 1938, when Mamouljian, in search of a script to direct for Harry Cohn, founder and then head of Columbia Pictures, came across one that would later become Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Cohn took the property from Mamouljian and gave it to Capra, Columbia's star director. In return for the loss of Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Cohn bought the rights to Clifford Odets' play Golden Boy for Mamouljian. After Golden Boy, Mamouljian never worked for Cohn again.

After more than a year, the SDG felt it had within its ranks an overwhelming majority of Hollywood's film

directors. The union now had sufficient power to operate as the legitimate bargaining agent for film directors. The Screen Actors Guild was the first Hollywood union to succeed in getting the studios to sign a contract. But it came only after it had threatened an industry-wide strike in May 1937. Four days after the SAG contract was signed, the Screen Directors Guild, heartened by the SAG victory, increased its ranks by admitting assistant directors and unit managers, and began contract demands.

In August 1937, the producers agreed to negotiate a contract with the SDG, but on one condition; directors, assistant directors, and unit managers would not be represented by the same union. The producers argued that directors were creative personnel with a greater degree of authority, able to hire and fire other workers and therefore not eligible for protection under the Wagner Act. Darryl Zanuck, chairman of the producers' bargaining committee argued:

Directors perform a service which is fundamentally creative. The rate of compensation, character of service and the authority of the director all demonstrate that he has no 'inequality of bargaining power' such as is contemplated by the Wagner Labor Relations Act. The director has substantial authority over the artistic development of a picture.

On the other hand, the unit manager and the assistant director represent the business and managerial side of production. . . . and in this respect represent the studio management. The nature of their respective employments often place the director on the one hand and the unit manager and the assistant director on the other at opposite viewpoints in the making of a picture. . . . and in many instances must represent conflicting judgments.¹¹

The producers accused the SDG of adding the assistant directors and unit managers in order to inflate their ranks artificially. Mamoulian, along with Howard Hawks and Edward Sutherland, was assigned to the Guild's negotiating committee together with John Ford and Herbert Biberman as alternates.¹² Because of the NLRB's backlog of cases, it was another year before the committee was able to hear the SDG case. By that time, John Ford's name replaced Mamoulian's on the Guild's letterhead. Mamoulian resumed an active role when proceedings got underway in August 1938. He replaced Frank Capra, who was away shooting a film.¹³

Between August 1937 and August 1938, Mamoulian had no film or projects on his immediate agenda. In October 1937, he traveled to Rome as an invited guest of the fascist government. The following press release remarks on his visit:

ROME, ... As if to heap coals of fire upon Roosevelt's head for the manner in which Hollywood-ites and New Yorkers treated his son, Vittorio Mussolini, Il Duce this week ordered that visiting ROUBEN MAMOULIAN, [director of Marie Christine (sic) and more lately of Paramount's "HIGH WIDE AND HANDSOME"] be given the most cordial hospitality in the power of the Italian govern [sic] to confer.

As a result, Film Czar LUIGI FREDDI's entire official motion picture setup, including himself, this week went out of their way to be extraordinarily cordial to the visiting director.

Freddi himself, with several aides and the Hon. CARLO RONCORONI, owner of the Roman Hollywood studios, lunched Mamoulian at the Cine Citta, took him through the smartly equipped studios, showed him everything there was to be seen, even to the comfortable BEDS in the female stars' sumptuous, bath-equipped dressing rooms!¹⁴

This, after his involvement in formation of the union, and after just having made High, Wide and Handsome, a film utterly anti-fascist in its viewpoint. Politics meant nothing to Mamoulian. For him there was no inconsistency between championing the rights of workers to organize a union and being feted by the fascists.

For the remainder of 1937, and much of 1938, Mamoulian busied himself with SDG business. And although for the first time in eight years he added no new film credits to his career, he did direct the San Francisco and Los Angeles stage productions of Porgy and Bess in the spring of 1938.

In the late summer of 1938, Mamoulian figured prominently in the drama between the film studios and the fledgling Screen Directors Guild. The Guild had succeeded in thwarting an attempt by IATSE in 1937, to assume union representation for directors and assistant directors. By that time IATSE had been taken over by crime syndicate figures from Chicago. These gangsters had no real interest in serving their constituents, only their own interests or those of the studio bosses.

In August 1938, the SDG's case came before the National Labor Relations Board. The SDG claimed that they represented virtually one hundred percent of the industry's directors, assistant directors, and unit managers. They supported this claim with a list of their members. In response, the studios voiced the two main

objections which Zanuck had already raised: that directors made exorbitant salaries, controlled their work, and therefore had no legitimate right to bargain collectively as laborers under the guidelines of the Wagner Act, and second, that assistant directors and especially unit managers were part of the management team in a film studio so it made no sense for them to be represented by a union. To the latter argument, the NLRB ultimately agreed, in part. The final decision, handed down on March 13, 1939, ruled that the SDG be recognized as the legitimate bargaining agent for directors and assistant directors, but not for unit managers. However, in this one initial contract, SDG would be permitted to negotiate for the unit managers.

As for the first objection voiced by the studios, when Mamoulian and Howard Hawks testified before the National Labor Relations Board for several weeks in the fall of 1938, Mamoulian received almost daily news coverage in the Hollywood papers. Early in the hearings Daily Variety reported that many of the directors, assistant directors, and unit managers on the SDG's membership roster had never paid dues or were delinquent in payment, thereby invalidating the SDG's claims to representation.¹⁵ Mamoulian, who was in the midst of testifying before the NLRB as SDG's representative, was among those who had not paid quarterly dues. The annual dues for directors making over thirty-thousand dollars a

year was \$250. This charge was used against the Guild by the studios.

Even more to the point, Mamoulian was questioned in hearings and his testimony was used by the producers to establish the illegitimacy of the directors' claims to the right to organize as laborers. Particulars of Mamoulian's salary history at Paramount were disclosed showing him to have begun at a salary of \$3,866.67 per week for City Streets, escalating eventually to the \$7,500 per week he received for directing High, Wide and Handsome. His final salary was quoted as having been \$178,750 for the latter, making him possibly the highest paid director in Hollywood at that time. The original shooting time for the film was scheduled at ten weeks but ended up being twenty-six weeks. In addition, his

Contract showed that no associate producer or supervisor could supervise Mamoulian's productions other than studio head without his consent. It also provided he be furnished with a private secretary.¹⁶

Mamoulian testified as to the importance of a director's contribution to the editing of his film. But this was already studio practice. None of this painted a picture of exploitation or the need of protection from an unjust producer.

The testimony was personally embarrassing to Mamoulian and, in some ways, damaging to the Guild's case. Even so, the NLRB ultimately ruled in their favor. The studios had to sign a contract with the SDG. Frank Capra used the opportunity to leave Columbia Pictures and

began producing independently. The studios never forgot or forgave the writers and directors who unionized, and so began the era of recriminations, of accusations of Communist infiltration of the film industry's union membership, leading to blacklists and imprisonments in the coming decade.

Mamouljian, according to the minutes of Guild strategy meetings during the hearings, spoke up little. When he did, it was only to restate in the most obvious and grandiose way, points that had already been made obvious by hours of vigorous discussion.¹⁷ Mamouljian came away from these hearings in April 1939, with a petition to the Guild requesting that his status be reclassified from "C" (highest paid), to "A" (lowest paid), because he was unemployed and received no income from filmmaking during that quarter.¹⁸ At this point, Mamouljian's name disappeared from the Guild's board until 1944.

One final note of interest from these hearings concerns the disclosure that, contrary to Mamouljian's lifelong claims never to have signed a long-term contract with options with any film studio, he had done so, beginning with City Streets and Paramount Pictures. After having been dropped following his one-picture contract with Paramount for Applause, Mamouljian apparently saw the benefits of signing on. This contract gave the studio an option for sixty weeks, to which were added two subsequent options for forty-five weeks each. The

contract provided for production of ten features, of which he completed five.¹⁹

Mamoulian's next film seems, at a glance, uncharacteristic of the work one associates with his career. Golden Boy, by Clifford Odets, was a success in 1937 when it was produced by The Group Theatre on Broadway. It was the kind of success Mamoulian liked to improve upon. The political drama about modern capitalist society, where there is no place for human sensitivity and art, only cynicism and brutality, seems too "agitprop" for Mamoulian's sensibilities. But the film script, stripped of its left-wing rhetoric and unhappy ending, by Lewis Meltzer, Daniel Taradash, Sarah Y. Mason, and Victor Heerman, contains the essential Mamoulian themes and character relationships. Early drafts of the screenplay even include Mamoulian's name in the screenplay credits, further confirming the probability that had he really begun each film with a clean slate, he would have been given screenplay credit.

With Golden Boy, Mamoulian, once again, selected material loaded with political and social content and diverted the emphasis to the Faustian conflict of the individual who must choose between his spiritual or his animalistic impulses. The hero is, once again, a young man of great artistic ability, a violinist--as was Mamoulian as a youth--who is tempted by quick fame, money, and the respect he can receive as a prize-fighter,

a skill at which he is equally gifted. He is a Jekyll-and-Hyde with his split personality of sensitive artist and lusty fighter, much like Mamoulian's next screen hero, Zorro. Like Porgy, Joe Bonaparte emerges from his naive, pristine, youth to adult consciousness, through the influence of an older, corrupted woman. It is transformed sexual desire for this woman, Lorna, that fuels his professional success. This time there are two older male adversaries who stand in the way of his sexual and professional fulfillment, Lorna's "fiancé," the fight manager, and his own father--each a father figure from one of Joe's two separate lives. As did previous Mamoulian heroes, Joe succeeds at both his professional and amorous aspirations, but at a price. He loses his soul in the process and wreaks destruction on the lives of others in his quest for self-fulfillment. In the end he is left with almost unendurable guilt. But unlike the Odets play, the Mamoulian film ends with an obligatory hopeful ending.

Golden Boy also continues the thematic thread of Song of Songs, Queen Christina, and Blood and Sand, in that it serves as a metaphor for Hollywood and Mamoulian's experience of it as a cannibalistic world of greed; a place where artistic sensitivity and appreciation are wasted on people who crave only bread and circuses; where artists are exploited and managers are villainous exploiters.

The film bears some resemblance to City Streets in that it depicts a similar dangerous gangster subworld into which the hero descends to satisfy his animalistic cravings and only barely survives. But in surviving the destructive powers he emerges wiser for having undergone the experience. Lorna, the devil-whore, like Nan in City Streets, uses the hero's love for her to seduce him into betraying his values and adopting her nihilistic ones. In the process, like Nan, Lorna is equally transformed by her experience with the noble youth and ascends as he descends. Again like Nan (and unlike Bess), Lorna is able to redirect the hero toward the spiritual renewal that she herself has undergone. Always, the message is to listen to one's inner voices.

The film is in no way innovative and falls victim to many cliches of sentimentality characteristic of Hollywood films of this period--made so, in part, because of Mamoulian. What it gains in abandoning the rhetorical excesses of the play, it loses in its sanitized depiction of poverty and crime and its abandonment of any exploration of the racial issues inherent in the fight between Joe and "The Chocolate Drop."

Mamoulian has the murdered boxer's father say, "We just little people, and all of us got a burden, even you," maintaining the screen image of blacks as lovingly accepting their status as morally superior victims, without rancor, and so patronizing blacks under the guise

of ennoblement. Mamoulian's artistic relationship with black themes remains consistently at a distance; that of a sympathetic outsider who sees African Americans as children of a noble spirit, given to pure expression of emotions. When the material Mamoulian had to work with attempts to add greater dimension and break through this dream-world perspective, he removes the anger and rage and panoply of qualities and emotions that would endow black characters with the power to be portrayed as fully dimensional adults. His treatment of blacks on stage and screen is only a magnification of the utopian world view that he imposes on all of his creations, and which contribute to a larger world view perpetrated by the Hollywood film industry of the time.

Mamoulian brings his skill at movement to the film and an energy and rhythm that most stage productions of Golden Boy lack. By using the studio's New York City locations, Mamoulian attempted to recreate the romantic world of the lovers amidst the inhuman scale of the city. But where Mamoulian succeeded so well in Applause, he failed to capture the same feeling in the Hollywood sets of New York used for Golden Boy. Still, both the interior and exterior settings display Mamoulian's attention to minutiae.

His ability to create visual poetry shines through in one scene, in particular; that of the fight near the film's end. It has an almost expressionistic quality not

seen since Applause, and not seen again in a similar context until Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull.

Finally, the film is memorable in great part because of the luminous performances of Barbara Stanwyck and Mamoulian's personal discovery, William Holden. Stanwyck was able to maintain control over her performance, and Holden credited her with having pulled him through his demanding assignment by coaching him in her trailer each evening after the day's shooting.²⁰ Lee J. Cobb, as Joe Bonaparte's father, ordinarily a powerful and intense actor, fared less well under Mamoulian's direction, or lack of it, delivering a performance marred by a comically broad Italian accent and excessive sentimentality, as if he were playing an Italian ethnic stereotype rather than a human being.

The MPPDA had numerous objections to the film's sexual innuendo, what they perceived to be religious blasphemy, and ethnic slurring or stereotyping. They were unhappy with Lorna's character, a kept woman, and insisted that she be referred to as the "fiancée" of Joe's manager, played by Adolphe Menjou. Lines suggesting her low moral character such as, "he picked me up" were suggested for deletion.²¹ The word "naked" could not be used, neither could references to bed or going to bed. Other examples of censorable dialogue were: "Is that crap?", "your mother too," "so you don't expect me to take the night shift," "the comedy of reproduction,"

"what the hell's so special in bed?" "I'll sleep alone tonight," "A woman's place is in the hay," "I feel like the resurrection," "I'm a tramp from Newark, Tom. I know a dozen ways," and many more.²² References to saints had to be cut.

Yet, as in all previous films, Mamoulian was able to retain much of the censorable material in the final cut, leaving it up to the regional distributors to regulate the film's showing and censor any material they found objectionable.

It was fully another year before Mamoulian released another finished feature film. He spent 1939-40 in pre-production for The Mark of Zorro. In the summer of 1940, he embarked on what would be his second most fruitful relationship with a film studio. Mamoulian's entrée into film through Paramount's Walter Wanger and Jesse Lasky was fortuitous for Mamoulian in that the Paramount mystique suited him and he it. Louis B. Mayer, Sam Goldwyn, and Harry Cohn were not men charmed by Mamoulian's effete bearing and taste, or his lecturing them on literature and art when they didn't see things his way. Darryl Zanuck, who had previously been head of production for Warner Brothers, had recently taken over the newly merged Twentieth Century-Fox Studios. Within a brief period he had built it into one of the most successful studios in Hollywood. In Zanuck, Mamoulian once again found a producer of intelligence and taste who

could appreciate what he had to offer, and who, in return would allow him the freedom and autonomy without which he could not work. It becomes clear from reading through the studio archival materials how involved Zanuck was in every detail of the films that came out of his studio. His memoranda are articulate, detailed, free of personal grievances and politicking. They are artistically insightful without being detached from reality. An intelligence and artistic sensibility comes across but one informed by practical considerations and aware of life outside of the film studio. Although he is the one in charge of his product he respects his collaborators and contributors. Where disagreements appear between Zanuck and Mamoulian, or Zanuck and the screenwriters, Zanuck's comments not only display sound intuition and business sense, but well-reasoned artistic judgment. Overall, Zanuck had much more to say about the various transformations of the script for The Mark of Zorro than did Mamoulian.

The Mark of Zorro had already been a successful action film with Douglas Fairbanks in the 1920s. The 1940 remake allowed Mamoulian still another opportunity to adapt an already successful and well-known work and succeed at the seemingly unwinnable challenge of improving upon the original. Documentation of script conferences on The Mark of Zorro appears as early as 1936, with an outline by Bess Meredyth, whose name also

appears on early drafts of the script for Queen Christina at M. G. M. This script, it appears, proved to be particularly difficult to develop. Many writers were brought in to work on it and Zanuck solicited critical opinion from colleagues at each step of development. The screenplay was adapted from Johnston McCulley's novel, The Curse of Capistrano, by Garrett Fort, who wrote the screenplay for Applause, and Bess Meredyth, with a screenplay by John Tainton Foote. No one could agree on how the plot should develop. Zorro's escapades were episodic rather than dramatic in structure, and could continue indefinitely or end at any point. For Zanuck, a major preoccupation was a desire to avoid Hollywood clichés of plot, character, and speech. He felt that the mask that Zorro wore was "phony" and "hokey," that the heroes and villains were too black and white.²³

Throughout the development period, Zanuck was moving the film toward greater credibility, logical motivation, and realism. This push toward greater realism reflected a trend in filmmaking that would leave Mamoulian's taste for stylization and montage, wit and fantasy farther and farther from the Zeitgeist. By the end of the Second World War, with the advent of neorealism in European film and its aftereffects in Britain and America, Mamoulian's style would be outdated. In The Mark of Zorro, Zanuck already found Mamoulian's ear too unresponsive to the sound of contemporary language and demanded many more

script revisions toward realistic-sounding dialogue than Mamoulian requested.

Republic Pictures proposed making a film entitled The Mask of Zorro based on the same subject at the same time as Twentieth Century-Fox was producing The Mark of Zorro, but later changed their title to The Return of Zorro. The Mask of Zorro would have been, perhaps, a more suitable title for Mamoulian's film. Although Zanuck objected to the artificiality of Zorro's mask and wanted a more subtle characterization, the mask was, as we have seen, a clue to the double identity of Mamoulian's protagonists. Diego, with his sensitive, gentle persona embodying stereotypically feminine characteristics masks the hero of guile, wit, superior intellect, physical and sexual prowess--the masculine identity revealed only beneath the mask of Zorro. Like so many Mamoulian protagonists, Zorro lives a double life. His animalistic persona is hidden, and only by way of the happy ending are the two halves of his identity integrated into a whole human being. The integration takes place, once again, through the intermediary of a seductive female who, in her own way also lives a double life, caught in a conflict between her baser sexual instincts and desire for independence--and energizing life force--and her refined upbringing and values which stifle these impulses. Through Zorro she is able to emerge an integrated adult as well.

The ever-present oedipal struggle propels the drama forward as Diego/Zorro must destroy the evil, usurping father who will not relinquish the authority that is Diego's birthright. Good and evil are starkly and simply drawn in the characterizations, much to Zanuck's displeasure. Diego is the mama's boy who, when transformed into Zorro, acts out his need to destroy the evil father.

This film continues to treat the underlying allusions to the world of Hollywood at the time. This time, the veiled illusion, or masking, lies in the story's Los Angeles setting, and its suggestion of a playing out of the union conflicts in which the film industry had been embroiled and was only just emerging from, with the downtrodden employees successfully unionizing, destroying the long held hegemony of the studio bosses. The studio heads, like usurpers in The Mark of Zorro were outsiders who had come to Los Angeles, taken control, and enslaved everyone under their jurisdiction. Mamoulian, like Zorro, was someone who came forward to strip power from those in charge and place it in the hands of the individual.

Such a conflict was also occurring in the global political situation of the time, and although Mamoulian distanced himself from politics, the connection between the conflicts in the film and outside events was not lost on the studio executives working on the film. One inter-

office memorandum on the development of the screenplay stressed the importance of theme as well as plot to make the picture work; the theme being

. . . the struggle for freedom and right against usurpation and injustice. . . . it should be a bugle call to stir the spectator long after the picture has been seen and its routine story line forgotten. For freedom and right, now more than ever precious and endangered things, as long as the spirit of man live, men must fight, even if they fight alone!²⁴

The film was fast-paced, elegantly and gracefully photographed, with a heroic musical score, once again by Alfred Newman, and a fairy-tale version of American history that fed into the nationalistic feeling of the moment.

Mamouljian got little trouble from the censors. The sexual titillation--protruding sword emerging from beneath the cape leading to seduction, or the obligatory Mamouljian voyeuristic indulgence in lingerie during scenes of female undressing, were handled innocently enough to provide the sublimated sexual appeal the distributors wanted without risking offense. The only trouble came from Reverend John J. McClafferty, Executive Secretary of the National Legion of Decency, protesting the depiction of a Franciscan friar in the role of a "piratical character," plus objections to characters crossing themselves, and references to "Madre de Dios."²⁵

The commercial and critical success of the Mark of Zorro led Mamouljian directly into a more ambitious project under Darryl Zanuck and Twentieth Century-Fox; a

sort of companion piece to Zorro making use of many of the same creative and virtually all of the same technical staff. These credits included the same assistant director, editor, art directors, set decorator, costumer, sound personnel, and composer. Tyrone Power and Linda Darnell were once again paired in the lead roles along with newcomer Rita Hayworth in her first starring role. Mamoulian's old associate Alla Nazimova, and Anthony Quinn, John Carradine, J. Carrol Naish, and Laird Cregar were cast in supporting roles. Hermes Pan, Fred Astaire's career-long choreographer, who would work with Mamoulian again on Silk Stockings, choreographed the fiesta scenes.

Blood and Sand was the second of four color films (again Technicolor, and again under the supervision of Natalie Kalmus) that Mamoulian completed during his career. Like Becky Sharp, Blood and Sand, more than anything else, is about color. Of all Mamoulian's films it is the most painterly, the most pictorial. Twentieth Century-Fox archives on Blood and Sand show very little writing by Mamoulian on this film. Again, it is Zanuck whose contributions to the script are noteworthy. Mamoulian evidently stuck to the visual elements. Mamoulian drew upon classic Spanish painting to stylize his cinematographic presentation:

For instance, Murillo bronzes, browns and blacks for Juan's poverty-stricken childhood; Goya, of course, for the bullring; Velasquez for Dona Sol's mansion (in essential flavour rather than detail: Velasquez as the master of light and shadow, of the richness of court life); El Greco for the matador's chapel;

fourteenth-century primitives for the death of Nacional (because he is a primitive); sixteenth century Venetians for Juan's dressing room, with the luxurious colour and bustling movement of Titian and Veronese in the ceremonial robing of Juan; Sorolla for the street and market scenes. . . .²⁶

The visual effect is indeed striking, as is the use of gongs and other sounds to create an eerie, surreal effect in the latter portion of the film. Such pastiche alternates with the overly romantic and melodramatic musical background score and the sanitized depiction of village life in Spain, with its colorfully costumed, happy peasants. The acting styles represented by the various performers are equally eclectic, making for inconsistent results. One must ask if Mamoulian's work in this instance can be called stylized or mannered. Once again, he appropriated the classics to give his work the mystique of high art. Arguably, what he ends up with instead is kitsch.

With a playing time of over two hours, the film is epic in scope. Mamoulian's choice of material consistently favored the epic rather than the dramatic in plot construction. Themes take on universal application as the time and place of the dramatic setting are not rooted in any concrete, temporal reality.

With a screenplay by Jo Swerling and based on the novel Sangre y Arena, by Vicente Blasco Ibañez, Mamoulian found yet another vehicle to play out his requisite themes and conflicts. The story follows the rise and fall of the matador Juan Gallardo. Gallardo is an arrogant and

ambitious young man of extraordinary talent who lives a double life. Initially, he is spiritually pure, but with success, the bullfighter pursues his animalistic impulses outside of the ring as well as inside it. This creates the Jekyll-and-Hyde dilemma between choosing the steadfast love of his childhood sweetheart turned wife, and the glamor of the seductive, worldly, older woman outside of his class. The two women represent the archetypal mother and whore. As in other Mamoulian films and stage productions, the scenes of seduction are erotically charged with sado-masochism, while scenes with the pure Carmen, Gallardo's wife, are cruelly sadistic toward her.

At the peak of his professional success, Gallardo tries to hold on to everything--career, wife, mistress, wealth. But the evil influence of succumbing to his animalistic desires leads him to self-destruction. That which drove him consumes him. Sex is a danger. To complete the trinity of women surrounding Gallardo, his world-weary and wise mother, like an oracle or a Greek chorus, reappears periodically warning him of his inescapable fate. True to the classic Mamoulian hero's mould, he is victim to the inner impulses that control him. But he can ultimately redeem himself by making conscious moral choices, even if he dies in the process. Like all Mamoulian women, Gallardo's mother knows her place--to be a background support for the hero. We see

her only on her knees, bent over, scrubbing a floor. The egocentric male protagonist is the character Mamouliau is really concerned about; the one around whom everyone else's life must revolve.

The film offered Mamouliau the opportunity to comment on modern society's increasing barbarism and the need to return to more traditional values of love and commitment to family. Like the boxing-ring in Golden Boy, the bull ring in Blood and Sand shows society's atavistic craving for bread and circuses. To illustrate this hunger as powerfully as possible, Mamouliau tried to include a "horse-eating" scene in the film, but Darryl Zanuck prohibited it.²⁷

Whatever allusions the film may have to the collapse of world culture under totalitarianism, it more closely alludes to the struggle of the artist in Hollywood who depends on those of inferior ability and quality for his livelihood--exploitative managers and the fickle audience. With success come the trappings of success; the big house, the easy money, the fame and adulation, and the availability of sex. These are irresistible temptations, ultimately nihilistic. The compulsive personality traits that drive the hero to the heights of success are the same ones that make his carnal appetites so overpowering. The hero who falls from great heights makes for good drama. Mamouliau was in the same situation as Juan Gallardo, Joe Bonaparte, Henry Jekyll. He sees

the dangers and the emptiness of the life he aspires to, but intoxicated by his own success, cannot give it up.

The next decade saw Mamoulian fall from just such an intoxication, as each of his protagonists does, and suffer the accompanying pain if not the complete self-destruction. Unfortunately, his suffering never seemed to transform him as it did his dramatic heroes.

The MPPDA had its predictable objections to the film. Joseph Breen noted that there was "undue breast exposure" in the film.²⁸ The Breen office was concerned that the wife was depicted as willing to condone her husband's adultery. The MPPDA asked that speeches be inserted denouncing Gallardo and Dona Sol's immoral behavior, followed by pages of suggested dialogue, some of which was actually inserted into the final cut of the film.

The board passed the film, but recommended that it not be exported to Latin America where the ethnic and cultural stereotypes might be offensive. Finally, the film was plagued with protests by the American Humane Society and Aimee Semple MacPherson against what they considered the film's cruel treatment of animals.

The completion of Blood and Sand in 1941, preceded America's entry into World War II by a few months. Once at war, film studios could not indulge in the extravagant filmmaking of a Blood and Sand. Mamoulian's next picture for Twentieth Century-Fox reflects the modest resources

available to make films and the accompanying need to depend less on lavish spectacle and more on dialogue and character development--not Mamoulian's strongest points. Tom Milne says of Rings on Her Fingers, Mamoulian's next film, completed in January 1942,

To work out his contract with Fox, Mamoulian made Rings on Her Fingers, a lightweight comedy about some amiable confidence tricksters hoist with their own petard, which turned out to be the only film he ever made in which one could not instantly recognise his hand. It is not so much that the film is bad--in fact, it is often elegant and amusing--as that it is un-Mamoulian in its reliance on dialogue. Possibly because he wasn't very interested, the film has no real rhythm, no visual motif, and can at best be described as second-rate Preston Sturges.²⁹

One explanation for the likeness in style to Sturges of Rings on Her Fingers might be found in Mamoulian's remark, "My main arguments with Mr. Zanuck have always revolved around speed. All he ever wanted in a film was speed. He never realized that speed was perceptible only in comparison to something slow."³⁰ The film therefore, may have been, in part, an attempt to please Zanuck after the very slow Blood and Sand, which was most likely the object of complaint to which Mamoulian refers.

Milne and other critics tend to dismiss Rings on Her Fingers as a slight and decidedly uncharacteristic Mamoulian film. Milne's suggestion that the film is reminiscent of Sturges is correct. But the film's many strengths need to be brought to the fore to balance the film's reputation, just as many of the unquestioned accolades of other Mamoulian works need reexamination.

Rings on Her Fingers stands up as a skillfully crafted entertainment, as much so as many of its more celebrated predecessors even if clearly not a pioneering work in Mamoulian's career. Film scholars might look at a similar situation early in Mamoulian's career when he directed Wings Over Europe. Mamoulian had established himself as a bravura showman of large-scale works. Wings Over Europe offered him the opportunity to display his showmanship by contracting rather than expanding. So, too, with Rings on Her Fingers.

The claim that the film is uncharacteristic of his body of work is false. While it may not be recognizable Mamoulian at first glance, it is congruent with his body of work. A shopgirl, Susan Miller, is propositioned by two skillful middle-aged con artists who see in her a perfect third accomplice to their schemes. By posing as wealthy and socially prominent, the older couple are able to befriend the truly wealthy and socially prominent, winning investments and cash favors. They select Susan to pose as their daughter to set up profitable matrimonial engagements and then profit from the divorce dividends.

We come across Susan as an innocent, unspoiled young woman of virtue. Underneath, she is dissatisfied with her lot in life and aspires to wealth and success beyond that afforded by working behind a department store counter. She accepts the offer, dons a figurative mask, and acts a part, leading a double life, as does the older woman and

her male companion. She becomes an actress of sorts and is quite good at it. She is superior to others and her charade betrays a kind of arrogant contempt for others. She becomes like her mentors. She meets a young man in Palm Beach, one of the wealthy resorts the trio frequent to cultivate their victims. He seems to be a perfect candidate, complete with yacht. As it turns out, the young man, John Wheeler, is an unemployed accountant spending not only his last savings on a posh holiday but some embezzled funds, as well, to ease the pain of having been fired. Up until this moment he seems to be an earnest, sensitive young man, a dreamer. He thinks he is smarter and more deserving than the meager rewards he has received in life. He has ambitions to live an unconventional life of independence, sailing around the world.

John allows Susan to draw erroneous conclusions about his position in life as a means of winning her favor. He, too, dons a figurative mask, acts a part, and leads a double life. The two double-dealers fall in love, the true identity of each a secret from the other. Their mutual passion becomes the force that leads to their choosing between satisfying base or nobler instincts.

Like Lily and Richard in Song of Songs, who are manipulated by the immoral older generation but finally succeed in saving themselves from succumbing to a similar fate, John and Susan are able to discard the masks that

might have become indelible with age; the masks they may have grown into. Both are spiritually renewed having rejected conventional morality and lifestyles. Both have "listened to their voices," their inner, truer selves rather than all the external messages and pressures around them. Like all of Mamoulian's films, it is a film of liberation; this one exuberant and energized to comic ends.

The sexual titillation, wit, sophistication, and fast pacing in the film are all characteristically Mamoulian. With the exception of The Mark of Zorro, Mamoulian's films followed a steady progression to slower and slower tempi. Rings on Her Fingers is a return to a more youthful pace. We see the artificial world of the social upper classes as well as the demi-monde of backroom gambling clubs. The original title of the screenplay, Double or Nothing, carries allusions not only to gambling and the confidence game, but also to the double life, of being a double, of being duplicitous in one's dealings. The world depicted and the two young lovers bear resemblance not only to Lily and Richard in *Song of Songs* but also to Nan and "the Kid" in *City Streets*. The Mamoulian themes and style are all there.

The problems with censors on this film also arose predictably. An overall complaint, strongly voiced, and similar to that leveled at many of the early Mamoulian films was that the leading characters do not pay for

their crimes; that the audience is led to enjoy their escaping punishment and see them as not deserving of any.³¹ Other objections included excessive depiction of drinking and, of course, sexually provocative language and images.

The board found the bathing suit worn by Gene Tierney, as Susan, and her behavior in it objectionable. The suggestion, that she is deliberately pursuing an illicit sexual relationship was criticized. The names "Irene, Betty, and Mabel" had to be changed because these were slang terms for contraceptives at the time.³² The elder female con artist, May, had a number of lines slated for censorship as too sexually suggestive, including: "keeping him busy," "other ways of doing it," and the line spoken by her partner Warren, "There are only two things left in life that are worthwhile--and one of them is eating."³³

Mamoulian was fortunate in having a true ensemble of extremely accomplished actors who were able to bring their considerable abilities to the film. They were Henry Fonda as John, and Gene Tierney as Susan, Spring Byington as May, and Laird Cregar as Warren. Fonda brings a carefully thought out performance to the film, while character actors Byington and Cregar are used particularly well.

At this juncture Gene Tierney served as catalyst for a real-life Mamoulian drama that parallels the

relationship of the two lovers in Rings on Her Fingers in some respects. Tierney introduced Mamoulian to Azadia Newman, a portrait artist and Washington, D.C., socialite whom he would eventually marry. Twice married, once divorced, and the cousin of Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor, she was the daughter of Edwin A. Newman, one-time Chairman of the Democratic National Committee and close friend of Woodrow Wilson. The family claimed to be one of the oldest in Washington, D.C., with considerable real estate holdings worth far more than any wealth Mamoulian ever accumulated. Mamoulian, who had aristocratic pretensions, and Newman who had artistic ones, were kindred spirits in the unconventional lives they pursued. Each offered the other the means to live out a fantasy existence, one that would ultimately become self-destructive. In Azadia Newman, Mamoulian would find an exotic combination of Muriel Carew and Ivy Pearson integrated in one woman--a woman of great social respectability, means and accomplishment, as well as a past to match any Mamoulian stage or film heroine of the demi-monde.

Chapter 8: BROADWAY AND HOLLYWOOD: THE FORTIES

For most of his early years in Hollywood, Mamoulian kept in regular contact with Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn of the Theatre Guild. By 1939, after a decade of hard times, only Langner, his wife Armina Marshall, and Helburn remained in power at the Theatre Guild. Those board members who had turned Mamoulian out were now gone.

In September 1939, Langner urged Mamoulian to come east. A new play was having rehearsal and tryout problems, and Langner thought Mamoulian could "doctor" the show successfully. So, in October, Mamoulian, between the pictures Golden Boy and The Mark of Zorro, went east to New Haven. The play in trouble, was William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life.¹ Robert Lewis resigned as director early in rehearsals forcing Mamoulian, Saroyan, the play's lead male actor, Eddie Dowling, and Theresa Helburn to piece the production together.

Before he accepted the offer to come east, he got a steady flow of scripts from the Guild for his consideration, of which the few he returned became the subject of much correspondence. Some of the scripts included: a piece entitled Passenger to Bali (author unnamed); The Happiest Man, by Dorothy Parker; Liberty

Jones, by Philip Barry (produced in 1941); One Flesh, a play about blacks by William Beyer; Peter Among the Horns, by Raymond Naya, which Langner and Helburn had hoped Mamoulian might persuade Annabelle and Tyrone Power to star in; Set My People Free, by Dorothy Heyward, another play about blacks by the recently deceased wife of DuBose Heyward; The Idiot, by Jose Ruben; Days of the Turbins, by Mikhail Bulgakov (to have been a musical), and Embezzled Heaven, a starring vehicle for Ethel Barrymore (produced in 1944). Mamoulian rejected all of these scripts with varying degrees of explanation, based on what he considered the merits of each script. In 1936, he had wanted to direct Maxwell Anderson's Mayerling but was at the time directing The Gay Desperado. Anderson had co-authored the screenplay to Mamoulian's We Live Again not long before. Mamoulian also expressed interest in directing another play by Maxwell Anderson, starring Helen Hayes, which Alfred Lunt finally directed, The Masque of Kings.

In retrospect, Mamoulian seems the obvious choice to direct Oklahoma! Because of its integration of plot, music, and dance movement into a unified whole, the show was hailed as a landmark in the history of the American musical theatre. Each element of the show was intended to support the other to the point where no one element or moment could be deleted without sacrificing the whole, and no one element or moment stand outside the whole as a

set-piece on its own. Mamoulian had worked to achieve this in all of his directing since his studies at the Moscow Art Theatre. It is what he brought to Rochester and what he worked to develop on the stage and in film.

But as obvious a choice as Mamoulian seems to have been to direct Oklahoma!, he was not the Guild's first choice. However, to hear Mamoulian tell it, one would never know anyone else was ever considered:

I worked with Dick Rodgers and Larry Hart on Love Me Tonight. They had had a very unhappy experience previously at M. G. M. But when they came to do this film, they dealt with no one but myself. I produced and directed the film, I told them what I wanted and they did it, so they knew how I worked. They begged me to direct Oklahoma!²

Of course, it was Hammerstein and not Hart who collaborated with Rodgers as writer on Oklahoma! Notice his emphasis on their submission to him. Oscar Hammerstein's biographer, however, reveals a slightly different account of Mamoulian's invitation to direct Oklahoma!:

Although, in retrospect, Mamoulian seemed the inevitable choice as director for the musical, in fact, several others were approached before him. As early as June 1942 Dick Rodgers wrote to Josh Logan but Logan went into the service that summer. Terry Helburn asked Brentagne Windust and Elia Kazan; the latter replied, "I reread Green Grow the Lilacs [the Lynn Riggs play on which Oklahoma! is based] and I just don't click with it. I'm afraid I'd do a very mediocre job."³

Oklahoma!'s evolution from "Helburn's folly," as it was known before its Broadway opening, has been told innumerable times. No one had faith that the play, a romantic bit of Americana about the coming of statehood

with the violent death of a main character in the second act, would be commercially successful as a musical at the nadir of the Second World War. The Theatre Guild had great difficulty raising funds to produce the show and few had faith in its potential success, let alone foreseeing the unparalleled success it would have.

Yet, in retrospect, each of the major collaborators is quick to claim credit for making Oklahoma! the landmark it has been recognized to be. Agnes de Mille, as choreographer, has retained much of the credit for the unique achievement of Oklahoma!, and her name is immediately associated with the work. Not so Mamoulian, in spite of his career-long commitment to the idea of the fully-integrated musical. For him, Oklahoma! was merely another opportunity to work as he always had done. Theresa Helburn credited herself with the idea of creating a new musical theatre form when she wrote:

. . . I decided the moment had come for the fulfillment of my dream, the production of a totally new kind of play with music, not a musical comedy in the familiar sense but a play in which music and dancing would be aids to and adjuncts of the plot itself in telling the story.⁴

Oscar Hammerstein's career before Oklahoma! points to an integration of music, dance, and plot elements into a unified whole, founded on serious subject matter for dramatization. For many critics, Hammerstein and Jerome Kern's Showboat, more than Oklahoma!, is the landmark musical in this regard. Those who favor with Oklahoma! argue that although the musical numbers in Showboat

advance the drama in an organic way, they can be extricated from the piece without any damage to them or the play as a whole--a quality, they argue, not true of Oklahoma!

Hammerstein's other collaboration with Mamoulian, High, Wide and Handsome, even more than Showboat, can be seen as the precursor to Oklahoma! The film, having a similar folkloric American setting and similar philosophical perspective, had already achieved what Oklahoma! had set out to do. The verisimilitude which film demands, above that of the stage, made Mamoulian's approach to directing musicals ideally suited to the film medium, as well as a product of it.

Oklahoma! appears to have been the coming together of like minds and sensibilities with no one artist able to claim dominant credit for its success. One might argue that the form of the musical was evolving inevitably toward Oklahoma!. In this regard Rodgers and Hart's musical Pal Joey is also often mentioned as a precursor to Oklahoma! Theodor Adorno observed:

A detailed comparison of the operetta between 1900 and 1930, on the one hand, with today's musical comedy on the other would probably show the objects differing in the form of economic organization. Artistically, in content and means, not much has changed; but the musical as opposed to operetta and revue is "streamlined." The slick, polished, cellophane-wrapped shows of today make the operettas and their kin look sloppy as well as too much in touch with their audience, if one may put it that way--while the musical comedy serves, in a sense, to retransfer the technological reification of motion pictures to the musical stage.⁵

Of all the power struggles Mamoulian experienced since The Beating at the Door, his troubles working on Oklahoma!, in his mind, put the wisdom of Grandma Kate to its greatest test. His difficulties with Agnes de Mille are almost legendary in musical theatre history. de Mille wrote:

Our director, Rouben Mamoulian, provided daily challenge. He was used to complete, unquestioned authority and total obedience. As a choreographer in a ballet company, I was used to the same.⁶

Both Mamoulian and de Mille described the other as creating obstacles at each stage of the rehearsal process. De Mille credits herself with everything innovative in the show; this, she claims she did by bringing ballet and genuine ballet dancers into the musical. Mamoulian had wanted the more conventional chorus girls. De Mille strongly objected to his condescending tone and, as she states, his jurisdiction over her work.

He, in turn, felt that she had no sense of the show as a whole; her only concern was displaying her dancers and her dances, inspired though they were. He cut dances and songs when he could not mold them into the whole. The famous song, "Boys and Girls Like You and Me," was cut from Oklahoma!, to resurface in the 1947 M. G. M. film Meet Me in St. Louis and as a popular song for radio and recording artists.

De Mille claims that "Mamoulian and the Guild frequently said, 'It can't be done.' It was always

Rodgers who urged, 'Let's see.'"⁷ Yet Mamoulian found himself in the position de Mille describes. He claimed that with Oklahoma!, or Away, We Go!, as it was called until the Broadway opening, he truly placed his career in jeopardy, that everyone thought they had a failure on their hands, that Mamoulian's new concept for a musical would put them out of business. He swore he would never direct in the theatre again should the production prove a failure. The Guild was fearful that the show did not open with an upbeat song and great spectacle; neither had a central character ever before died a violent death in a musical's second act. The Guild management was also worried that in place of attractive chorus girls trained ballet dancers would prove fatal at the box-office.

When the play previewed in New Haven, the Guild brought George Abbott in to offer suggestions as to what might be done to salvage the production from financial disaster. Abbott supposedly reassured them by stating that he wished he had such a good show about to open.⁸ It was probably these concerns that led to two particular changes in the show during its subsequent Boston preview performances; changes which, once again, demonstrate Mamoulian's skill as a showman and his understanding of the importance of showmanship even in an "integrated" musical, supposedly free of gratuitous material. One of these changes succeeded; the other failed. One resulted in the choral finale of the show's title song. The other

was having a flock of pigeons fly across the stage on cue as the curtain rose on the first act depicting an outdoor rural setting. The pigeons were not dependable performers and many remained in the theatre's scaffolding irretrievably.

The antagonisms with the Guild extended to other aspects of Oklahoma!. When the show opened to acclaim on Broadway, Mamoulian felt stung yet one more time by the Guild; this time by Rodgers and Hammerstein as well. He had staked his career on their challenge to his work on Oklahoma! and the risk he took brought them success. They, in turn, he claims, refused to even shake his hand in congratulation. Closer examination shows that disagreements involved more than artistic choices.

Feature articles on Mamoulian and Oklahoma! appeared even before its New York opening, and in profusion afterwards. More than was the case with Porgy, Porgy and Bess, or High, Wide and Handsome, the press exploited the angle that Mamoulian, even though a foreigner, had an astounding ability to capture the essence of Americana. Mamoulian took full credit for the achievement of Oklahoma! and added that its success was realized over the objections of his producers and collaborators.

These feature stories and interviews did not appear by happenstance. Mamoulian engaged a press agent to promote Oklahoma! as his success, and thereby provoked a series of legal threats by the Guild and Rodgers and

Hammerstein. Mamoulian reciprocated with his own threats as in the following exchanges. The first is a transcription of a telephone conversation between Mamoulian and Lawrence Langner which took place June 16, 1943:

Mr. M. - "How are you?"
 LL - "I am not well at all!"
 Mr. M. - "What's the matter?"
 LL - "As a matter of fact I am fed up with you and your lousy publicity! It's got to stop!"
 Mr. M. - "What publicity?"
 LL - "The stories you have been giving out in PM, Sunday Mirror, Christian Science Monitor, etc. You are just aggrandizing yourself at the expense of everyone else."
 Mr. M. - "What do you mean?"
 LL - "And what's worse, you told a damn lie in PM, saying that you were going to direct Porgy and Bess in the pictures when this had fallen through, and also saying that I had tried to cut out a scene in Porgy and you told me I could either take it out or you would go. I have never been so insulted publicly in my life!"
 Mr. M. - "Why, I didn't say that."
 LL - "Saying you hired Alfred Drake and Joan Robert, in the Mirror, when you know that contracts were signed with them long before you were even asked to direct the play. -- Saying in the New Yorker that you had resuscitated The Theatre Guild"
 Mr. M. - (Shouts) "Wait a minute!"
 LL - "I won't wait a minute. You can go right to Hell!"
 (LL slams down receiver)⁹

This was followed by a letter from Langner, Helburn, and Rodgers and Hammerstein accusing him of hiring a press agent to exploit the show's success for his own benefit. They pointed out that Oklahoma! was the property of the Theatre Guild and only they, through their press department, had the legal right to exploit the production in the press. They specified examples of Mamoulian's legal

transgressions of this agreement and the

. . . number of untrue statements which are derogatory to The Theatre Guild and to other parties employed in the production of the play. . . . you claim credit, or your press agent claims credit in your behalf, for the quiet opening of the play, the period of the costumes, and the position of the first two songs -- all of which were clearly set by the authors in the script. And you also claim credit for the casting of Alfred Drake and Joan Roberts in the leads when these two players were already picked and their contracts signed, long before you ever came into the picture.¹⁰

To these accusations Mamoulian responded June 23, 1943:

Dear Terry and Lawrence:

This is in reply to your extraordinary letter of June 19th, delivered to me yesterday. The motivation behind it is not obscure to me, and it is consistent with your behavior during the past few months.

As you well know, in spite of the disingenuous assumptions of your letter, I have not been exploiting "Oklahoma!" but have been discussing for the press my own professional activities, which are what I have to offer, and the means of my livelihood.

"Oklahoma!" happens to be only one of the many notable and successful productions which I have directed on the stage and on the screen; as the direction of the entire production of "Oklahoma!" is my most recent work, it is perfectly obvious and natural that in any discussion of my professional activities with the press, "Oklahoma!" has its proper place.

As Mr. Langner was himself careful to point out to me when it seemed in your interest to do so, the fact is that newspapers are not under control of those they interview and write about. . . . I consider the whole tone of your letter, and the phrases attributing to me untruthful statements and unethical practices offensive and insulting. The privilege of issuing untrue statements I leave to you. It is evident that you yourselves realize that your accusations are baseless and false, as in the same letter you say "it is our belief that you do not wish to interfere with our exploitation of our property, or to claim credit for yourself which belongs to other parties." Thus you have honestly answered yourselves.

Your letter has in fact attributed to me the very wrongs and course of conduct of which you have

yourselves been concertedly guilty. I have protested repeatedly in the past and I protest again against the manner in which stories and interviews on "Oklahoma!" arranged by the Theatre Guild's Press Department minimize my contribution to the production of "Oklahoma!", suppressing and distorting facts in that regard, even so far as to make it appear that persons other than the director were responsible for the work which was mine. In spite of your promises and assurances, nothing was done to correct this.

Moreover, it has come to my attention from a number of sources that you have been making false, defamatory and derogatory statements about me generally, and in connection with my work on "Oklahoma!" Not only is this a wrong against me personally but my livelihood depends on my reputation as a director. I can be damaged in that and in other respects by false statements about me and I will not countenance it.

This letter also covers my answer to Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Hammerstein, and I am sending copies of it to both of them.

Very truly yours,

(signed)

Rouben Mamoulian¹¹

Oklahoma! contains much that is consistent with Mamoulian's other work. The setting of the piece is turn-of-the-century Oklahoma at the time of its transition from territory to statehood. As in Porgy, we are introduced to a folkloric village world and its stock character types. Conflict arises between those who wish to impose bourgeois domestic values on those who favor unregulated, unrestricted freedom. Both are characteristic of American culture, comprising a dialectic consistent with the personal dialectic central to Mamoulian's work.

A romantic triangle exists between Judd, Curley, and Laurie--the female object of desire. Judd and Curley

resemble the two parts of a single individual; a schism between the good and the evil, the animalistic and the spiritual. Judd represents the darker, baser, threatening instincts of sexuality and violence. Curley represents purity, love, lightness and air. The music of the two men further confirms these characterizations. Laurie is drawn to both the danger of Judd and the safety of Curley. As with the natural disasters in Porgy, Song of Songs, and High, Wide and Handsome, with their hurricane, fire, and flood, the evil presence of Judd must be cleansed in the fire that kills him. Through his immolation, he is destroyed by his own sexual heat and rage. This allows for the restoration of natural harmony in the community. The evil threat of sexual desire has been consumed, although not consummated.

Mirroring the serious conflicts of the central romantic triangle is a subplot centered around the farcical triangle of Ali Hakim, Will, and Ado Annie. Ado Annie, the girl who "can't say no," has the opposite problem of Laurie, who can't say yes (to sex). Ali Hakim is the farcical version of Judd, and Will, the farcical Curley. Ali Hakim, being of vague middle-eastern ethnicity, is depicted as being of the darker, more sexually aggressive races. As a hawker of pornography, he introduces the hidden world of sex to the sexually repressed mainstream culture.

The producers of Oklahoma! wondered how the escapist subject matter would ever appeal to a wartime audience with more serious matters on its mind. Yet, not only did the piece afford escape into a simple, untroubled world, but it played out the archetypal conflicts of good and evil, where a holocaust rids society of a menace. The piece concludes with new beginnings through the resurrection of a new political state and the restoration of traditional values. Renegade behavior and unrestricted freedom submit to the forces of control and order. Animalistic impulses are destroyed or channelled into more constructive, unthreatening, spiritual ones.

While Oklahoma! headed toward its record-breaking 2,248 performances on Broadway by retreating into a naive, ideal world, Hollywood worked under wartime austerity, and a new outlook emerged, breaking away from the naive escapism which had characterized many films of style in the nineteen-thirties. These new films examined the American experience with a new realism, from a deeper, darker perspective. In 1941, two films premiered which changed the history of film--Orson Welles' Citizen Kane, and John Huston's The Maltese Falcon. With them began what would become known as film noir. Otto Friedrich writes:

Some experts ascribe the flowering of film noir during the early 1940's to some of the German refugees--Lang, Wilder, Preminger, Siodmak--who brought with them memories of the style that had been developed at the UFA studios in Berlin. Others suggest that it was simply a matter of economics

. . . . shooting a film in moody darkness and rain tended to disguise the cheapness of the sets.¹²

One of the most popular films of this genre was the 1944 film Laura, with its still popular title song by David Raskin and Johnny Mercer--Mamoulian's next film project. This film was the beginning of the end for Mamoulian in films. It was the first of several features from which he was either fired or resigned.

Laura was Mamoulian's fourth and last film for Darryl Zanuck and Twentieth Century-Fox. The story's central female character, Laura, is presumed murdered. The detective investigating her murder falls in love with her portrait. One day she appears, very much alive, and the detective suspects her of having committed murder.

In many respects, Laura had all the makings of a promising Mamoulian film: a sensitive young man's obsession for a fantasy woman and the consequences of dealing with the less satisfying reality. Through art, through the art of painting, romantic desire, fantasy, and idealization are inspired. Laura is the split archetypal female identities of madonna and whore. She lives a double existence, baffling and deceiving the detective and her friends. Her secret, hidden life, is her sex life. Like most Mamoulian heroines, she is independent and prizes her independence. Every character in this film is duplicitous--presenting himself one way for appearance's sake, masking a true identity.

Mamoulian's soon-to-be wife, Azadia Newman, painted a portrait of Gene Tierney, the film's Laura.¹³ This portrait is a visual focal point in the film. Azadia was like Laura, like virtually all of the significant women in Mamoulian's life and art--an idealized female, exotic in appearance, poetry-inspiring, yet masking a baser, highly sexually-charged inner being and lifestyle. It was Tierney who had introduced the two.

This was Mamoulian's second feature with Tierney. He had worked, too, with Laura's screenwriter, Samuel Hoffenstein, on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Love Me Tonight, and Song of Songs. In spite of what seemed to augur well for Mamoulian, key factors were working against him. For one, the austere conditions under which films were being made at the time did not sort well with Mamoulian's working habits. A cover page to the typescript of Laura, like so many at that time, had stamped on it:

LESS SHOOTING HERE MEANS MORE SHOOTING OVER THERE--
SAVE FILM!¹⁴

In addition, Hollywood and films were changing. The artistic sensibility emerging was not one Mamoulian shared. The film of escape through style and sophistication was giving way to one that did not shy away from the consequences implicit in the action.

Zanuck, in a first draft memorandum about the script for Laura complained at length that the characters, as written, were flat, and compared them unfavorably to the distinctive characters of The Maltese Falcon.¹⁵ Mamoulian

was too detached from the lives of real people to offer the kind of insight film noir strove for.

Moreover, Mamoulian faced an antagonistic producer, Otto Preminger, who coveted the job of director of the film:

. . . Rouben Mamoulian had been signed up to direct Laura, and Mamoulian had lots of ideas of his own about sets and costumes and how actors should act. He also asked Preminger, the producer, not to come near the set. "He said I made him nervous," Preminger recalled. Preminger acquiesced but insisted that the rushes be sent to Zanuck. Zanuck hated them. In the crowded executive dining room at Fox, Zanuck suddenly said to Preminger, "What do you think? Shall I take Mamoulian off the picture?" Preminger's answer was unequivocal: "Yes."¹⁶

And so Mamoulian, who had not been Zanuck's first choice to direct the film, was fired from it. How much of the design and execution of the film is Preminger's and how much of it is Mamoulian's, carried through by Preminger is unclear. In a 1971 interview, cinematographer Lucien Ballard claimed that he and Mamoulian shot seventy-five percent of the film together and that Preminger merely executed Mamoulian's plans for the remainder of the film and reshot "just a little."¹⁷ Unlike other film noir, Laura is all style and plot contrivances without any of the deeper insight into the dark side of human nature usually associated with the style.

Laura marked the end of Mamoulian's working relationship with Darryl Zanuck, although not with Twentieth-Century-Fox; and history would practically

repeat itself when Mamoulian's path would cross that of Otto Preminger again fourteen years later.

Clearly, Mamoulian had no acceptable film offers for two years so, in 1944, he returned to New York and the theatre. In the theatre, he knew his work could not be subjected to the final edit of a producer or distributor.

Alfred P. Waxman, publicity chief for Paramount Pictures, hired Mamoulian to direct a stage musical version of Somerset Maugham's Rain.¹⁸ The finished project was entitled Sadie Thompson, after its lead character. Mamoulian co-wrote the book with lyricist Howard Dietz. Russian-born composer Vernon Duke composed the music. Ethel Merman was hired to play the title role but resigned early in rehearsal because of incompatibility with Mamoulian. She was replaced by June Havoc. The lavish sets were designed by Boris Aronson.

Mamoulian attempted to transfer the montage technique of filmmaking to the theatre. Unfortunately, extreme emphasis on pictorialization can sustain a film more easily than it can a theatre piece:

Mamoulian sought to make an overwhelming theatrical experience of Sadie Thompson. Dietz, Duke, and Mamoulian wrote twenty-five musical numbers, including three "montages," or, elaborate story-ballets Mamoulian and choreographer Edward Caton used the montages to reveal the superstitious, primitive environment of steamy Pago Pago. . . . and . . . to reveal Reverend Davidson's repressed sexual fantasies.¹⁹

Bennett Oberstein describes this elaborate production which included only one intermission, as containing:

two "curtains," one made of water, the other of a chorus of dancers. Falling both upstage and downstage, the "water curtains" reinforced the tropical "Rain" image, as well as masking the shift of set pieces too heavy to be flown. . . . Using both the water curtain and what he called "the human sculptural frieze," in rhythmic counterpoint to each other, Mamoulian changed the scenery in full view of the audience.²⁰

The production opened at the Alvin Theatre on November 16, 1944, to generally negative reviews and ran for only sixty performances. The criticism focussed on the excesses of the production: all form, no content. Variouslly, it was labelled arty, mannered, pompous, and melodramatic, bordering on the ludicrous.²¹

With Sadie Thompson, Mamoulian believed he had another suitable vehicle for creating total integration of theatrical elements into an organic whole while treating serious subject matter. Once again, he selected an exotic, folkloric setting to tell a story about the struggle between the spiritual and the animalistic, meaning, between the expression and the suppression of sexual desires. Again the story has a biblical-religious aspect to it and the struggle of a heretofore pure male protagonist and the female object of desire. Mamoulian was treading familiar territory. The production, as reviewed, bore many similarities to the 1928 Congai.

Mamoulian felt that, without the failure of Sadie Thompson, the success of Carousel which followed soon afterwards would not have been possible. Sadie Thompson taught him to restrain his tendency for overproducing,

over-complicating the simple. It also enabled him to apply his skill at seamless editing in film to seamless transition from dialogue to song and dance and back again into an organically unified, integrated musical drama.

Carousel, the second Theatre Guild-Rodgers and Hammerstein-de Mille-Mamoulian collaboration opened April 19, 1945, at the Majestic Theatre and ran 810 performances. The Theatre Guild once again turned to its past successes in selecting material to musicalize and came up with Ferenc Molnar's Liliom. They had triumphed in the 1921 production, starring Eva LaGalliene and Joseph Schildkraut, and again in a Westport, Connecticut, summer theatre production in 1941 with Tyrone Power and his wife Annabelle. Ingrid Bergman and Burgess Meredith had also appeared in a 1941 Broadway revival of the play.

Molnar had refused all previous offers to have the play musicalized, including one by Giacomo Puccini who wanted to compose an opera based on Liliom. But supposedly after seeing a performance of Oklahoma!, he was willing to entrust the play to Rodgers, Hammerstein, de Mille, and Mamoulian.²² The play was originally set in Hungary. At first, the setting of the musical was to have been shifted to New Orleans, but Hammerstein felt creatively inspired when the suggested location was changed to New England. The reassembled collaborative team had dramatically stronger raw material with which to work this time and the result was a work of greater

dimension; musically and dramatically. Jo Mielziner replaced Lemuel Ayres, who had gone to Hollywood and M. G. M. since Oklahoma!, as set designer for this most operetta-like of all Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals.

The lyrical, romantic quality of the musical score serves as a counterpoint to the dark story of monetary struggle and sexual abuse worthy of the kind of treatment Mamoulian brought to Applause and City Streets. Liliom descends from the naturalistic tradition, examining life in the lower strata of society. Those who reject the values of bourgeois life are doomed to suffer the consequences. True to all Mamoulian depictions of life on the fringes of society, the participants, although victimized by the dominant culture, have the freedom to exercise control over their fates through conscious moral choices. They can succumb to the degradation of their environment, thereby contributing further to its decline, or exert their will and extricate themselves from it. In the intervening years since Applause and City Streets, Mamoulian's own sensibilities had led him away from any harsh portrayal of the lower depths. In Carousel, he created a stylized romance, another mythical Americana. The stylized presentation evaded any harsh outcome.

Carousel depicts the romance between a carousel barker in a carnival in turn-of-the-century New England named Billy Bigelow and a factory worker named Julie Jordan. He embodies sexual power, independence, charm,

and danger. She is cautious, but taken by his aura of sexual danger. He is drawn to her spiritual purity and emotional depth; her earthiness and earnestness. Both are loners, individualists. Both are dreamers in a world that suffocates dreams by the exigencies of economic necessity and subservience to bourgeois expectations. They are contrasted with another young couple, friends of Julie's, whose aspirations conform to bourgeois norms, and whose bourgeois values include intolerance of, and moral superiority to, anything beyond those norms.

When Julie gets pregnant, the panic of economic necessity leads Billy to agree to the armed robbery of a factory-owner. The robbery-attempt fails, and Billy commits suicide rather than face the humiliation of his deed. In the afterlife, Billy looks down on the world he left behind. It is many years later, and the daughter he has never seen is graduating from high school. She is an outcast, a rebel, just as he was.

Throughout, we see the sado-masochistic relationship of Billy and Julie, creating the conflicts at the individual level that move the drama forward. Both poverty and Billy's spiritual weakness are responsible for the suffering he and his family experience. Ultimately the power of love transcends all others. Julie bears some resemblance to Svetlana Mamoulia and Sister Beatrice in her relationship to her man.

Carousel opened to unanimous critical acclaim. In spite of the repeated success of the collaboration between Mamoulian and Rodgers and Hammerstein, he was never asked to direct for them again, nor was he offered the film versions of Oklahoma! or Carousel to direct. Rodgers and Hammerstein's next musical, Allegro, was directed by Agnes de Mille, and their subsequent effort, South Pacific, by Joshua Logan. The complete authority which Mamoulian demanded increasingly became a liability on both stage and screen. The success of Oklahoma! and Carousel only added to Mamoulian's sense of himself as a genius.

While in New York in 1945, Mamoulian was in contact with his friend Anita Loos. Loos had written a new play entitled Happy Birthday to star Helen Hayes. Mamoulian considered directing the play but finally declined. Joshua Logan directed instead. Loos was also under contract to M. G. M. and was writing a screenplay for S.N. Behrman's play, The Pirate which, produced by the Theatre Guild in conjunction with the Playwright's Company, had been a success in 1942 with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Mamoulian rejected this film script. He had also recently signed a contract with Arthur Freed's famous musical-producing unit at M. G. M. Freed took Loos's script and gave it to Vincente Minnelli to direct with Judy Garland and Gene Kelly in 1946.

With the recent successes of Oklahoma! and Carousel, plus his achievements with Love Me Tonight, Porgy and Bess, and High, Wide and Handsome, Freed decided that Mamoulian would be a valuable director to retain under contract. Virtually every film that one associates with the "golden age" of M. G. M. musicals in the nineteen forties and fifties was produced by the Freed Unit at M. G. M. Hugh Fordin in his book on the Freed Unit states:

Supposedly Mamoulian was to work on Jumbo. . . . however, he was engaged to direct The Belle of New York.²³

But Mamoulian directed neither Jumbo nor The Belle of New York. In December 1945, Freed proposed to Mamoulian that he make a musical version of Eugene O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness!, to which M. G. M. already owned film rights. At first, Mamoulian was disinclined, but upon further reflection, became more and more excited about the idea. Screenwriter Irving Brecher, composer Harry Warren, and lyricist Ralph Blaine were pulled off The Belle of New York project, not to resume until 1951, and put to work on Mamoulian's film musicalization of Ah, Wilderness! Fordin reproduces a series of memoranda sent by Mamoulian to his collaborators postulating the differences between the original play and the transformation process required to turn it into a musical film. Instructions follow outlining precisely what Mamoulian wanted from each collaborator. Fordin remarks:

It was evident from the beginning that this was going to be a one-man show. A man of Mamouljian's caliber and experience does not work through departments; departments are simply there to execute his plans, articulated to the most minute detail. Mamouljian's politely dictatorial modus operandi met with apprehension.²⁴

Before filming ever got underway, Mamouljian was causing an uproar in practically every technical department assigned to the film. Costume czar Cedric Gibbons was told to mute the color palette of the costumes to achieve an early-American painterly effect. This ran contrary to M. G. M.'s policy of setting the screen ablaze with the still new Technicolor process. Studio executives reasoned that when people come to see a color film they expect to see color; in the same way, they had said years earlier that when they paid actors full salary to perform they wanted to see their whole bodies in the frame.

Disputes arose with the writers and with the costume department. Yet Mamouljian got his way one more time.

Then a concatenation of events led to an interruption of the proposed filming of the Ah, Wilderness! project, and Mamouljian directed one more lavish Broadway musical in late winter 1946.

He planned to travel to New York to win approval from O'Neill for his reworking of the play. Once again, he asserts that after initial disapproval he was able to secure enthusiastic consent from O'Neill for his plans:

Even O'Neill was skeptical--at first. . . . but I sold him on my point of view. The approach, I said,

would be simple; we would keep the story, the characters and the underlying psychology. "But," I added, "the more I revere your work, the bolder I must be in changing it."²⁵

Specifically what kind of consent was needed is unclear as M. G. M. had purchased the film rights to the play a decade earlier and had already released a film version of the play, directed by Clarence Brown.

Mamoulian also received a telegram January 23, 1946, and probably other correspondence, from "Dick, Oscar Lawrence, and Terry"²⁶ urging him to return to New York for a week to redirect Oklahoma! and Carousel which needed restaging because of cast changes.

Aware of Mamoulian's upcoming trip to New York to see O'Neill, Freed asked Mamoulian if he would assist a musical stage production in trouble in Boston tryout performances. Mamoulian consented. Freed had produced St. Louis Woman as a vehicle for Lena Horne, but she never took on the part as anticipated, marking the beginning of the production's difficulties with cast changes in the feminine lead. Oklahoma!'s set designer, Lemuel Ayres, under contract to M. G. M., had been hired to direct the show, and it was having difficulties. Mamoulian offered to fix the show but, characteristically, only if he could redo the show, unobstructed. Ayres resigned, and Mamoulian received full directorial credit for the show. The script underwent revision, as did the songs and production numbers. Choreographer Anthony Tudor was fired and replaced by Charles Walters.

St. Louis Woman was adapted from the book God Sends Sunday, by Arna Bontemps and poet Countee Cullen. The music was composed by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, and included such songs as "Come Rain or Come Shine" and "Any Place I Hang My Hat is Home." The story, set in turn-of-the-century St. Louis, concerns the romance between a jockey and a sexually free woman amidst a social backdrop of intra-racial bigotry between light-skinned and dark-skinned blacks.

Mamouljian decided to reduce the racial conflict to a minimum, believing that there was enough racism against blacks from whites without giving the white theatre-going audience the idea that blacks victimized each other with color consciousness. Once again, rather than illuminating a social problem by exposing it, Mamouljian decided to avoid treating a central issue in the play.

Pearl Bailey, who made her Broadway debut in St. Louis Woman, recalled an incident during rehearsals in Philadelphia:

. . . the cast was in an uproar. The mumbling had grown as loud as thunder. It had to do with the funeral scene. In that scene June Hawkins had killed her lover, and when she came to the grave she was to fall on her knees and raise her hands to heaven. That, in turn, was to make everyone else sad enough to do the same. Well, sir, that gesture only served to make the cast angry. They felt it was too Negroid.²⁷

Bailey goes on to describe how the cast finally expressed their feelings, and he responded to their complaint by reminding them that he had directed Porgy and was someone

who appreciated the contribution blacks had made to music in this country. The rehearsal atmosphere, according to Bailey, became more cooperative after this lecture. Mamoulian was clearly relying on a directorial vocabulary he had used years earlier. This reapplication of previously used staging devices reveals a creative waning already in progress for nearly a decade.

Reviews for St. Louis Woman were mixed. Critics generally liked some songs and production numbers, but not others. Most felt the piece did not work as a whole. Many reviews made comparisons between Mamoulian's stagings of large group scenes with those in Porgy and Bess, remarking on stage patterns well-known to any who had seen his previous work. One reviewer wrote:

And though the book of St. Louis Woman is the work of two very reputable Negro writers, one questions whether the kind of glib characterizations it falls back on, the kind of stock humor and melodrama, is in the Negro's best interest.²⁸

St. Louis Woman opened in New York at the Martin Beck Theatre on March 30, 1946, and ran for 113 performances. Besides Pearl Bailey, the cast included the Nicholas Brothers, Ruby Hill, Rex Ingram, and Juanita Hall.

Before returning to Los Angeles to resume work-in-progress for M. G. M., Mamoulian had unfinished business with the Theatre Guild to clear up. Where the Guild and Rodgers and Hammerstein had feuded with Mamoulian after the opening of Oklahoma! for what they considered his

excessive, unwarranted, and illegal self-promotion in the press, Mamoulian simultaneously complained of their not awarding him proper billing credit in the advertising of the show. This became an issue of contention, continuing unabated through the run of Carousel:

Several times in the past I have brought to your attention the extreme shyness which the Guild has been displaying in regard to giving me due professional credit for my work in "Oklahoma" and "Carousel." Not only has the Guild been most reticent about it in its general overall publicity connected with those plays but in several instances it failed to fulfill even the minimum obligatory requirements of my contract. You had promised me repeatedly in the past that this situation would be corrected but I have seen no tangible results up to date. . . . As you are fully aware, my present trip to New York was caused by your urgent request. When you told me over the long distance phone that the let-down in the performances in both productions was so grave as to possibly shorten their lives on Broadway by one year, I came to New York at once. Contractually, I was under no obligation to do so. Furthermore, at the time I was in the midst of preparing my next motion picture under contract to M-G-M. The trip was made possible by leave of absence and by a considerable financial sacrifice of several weeks of my salary. If you think that my function as the director of "Oklahoma" and "Carousel" is so important when the shows are in trouble I should imagine that you would consider it equally important when it comes to giving it due credit.²⁹

And so on for another page. To this letter the Theatre Guild responded with apologies and explanation. But three weeks later Mamoulian wrote again:

I am enclosing a copy of the circular letter which is being sent by The Theatre Guild to its subscribers in Los Angeles. Several thousands of this same letter were sent out by the Guild in San Francisco, and undoubtedly many more thousands were sent to subscribers all over this country wherever "Oklahoma!" has played. This document mentions every possible credit connected to the show, including yourselves of course, but completely omits mine, as

the director of that production. This is not only disgusting and infamous from any point of view, but it also constitutes one more breach of my contract by The Theatre Guild. . . . I have no way of knowing what goes on in New York, or on the road, when I am not personally there to see. Am I supposed to hire an army of private detectives to watch my interests and rights, or can I rely once and for all on The Theatre Guild to at least fulfill the minimum requirements of our legal agreement?³⁰

Mamoulian did hire a service to inspect the billing he received by the Theatre Guild nationwide.

The musical film of Ah, Wilderness! Mamoulian returned to not only brought renewed struggles with writers and studio department heads, but when filming commenced in June 1946, Mamoulian had to contend with some of the most virulent union unrest in Hollywood history and the beginning of the post-war political investigations of suspected Communists in the film industry. Word was out that the House UnAmerican Activities Committee was planning to target the film industry for investigation of suspected union domination by Communists.

Upon completion of shooting the opening sequence of the film, a conflict between the Teamsters' Union and IATSE, the stagehand's union, delayed further filming as violent conflict broke out in the streets. At first, Mamoulian proceeded with rehearsals and vocal prerecording, but when costars Walter Huston and Selena Royle refused to cross the picket line, the company was laid off. The twenty total layoff days cost the film an additional \$405,000. This was in late June 1946. By mid-July,

filming resumed when the striking unions entered into negotiations. Nevertheless, even though in the beginning the production had been hampered beyond anyone's control, "once underway again. . . Mamoulian was proceeding very slowly and was way behind schedule."³¹

What took so long was the attention to detail characteristic of Mamoulian's working methods. In directing every technical and artistic aspect of a film he worked at adjusting every lapel and bow on every costume, fine tuning the hue of each garment, and timing each movement of each actor so that a desired rhythmic effect could be achieved. He intended all of this detail to achieve the overall effect of creating an idyllic vision of America as he envisioned the America of his boyhood reading to be, and as he perceived O'Neill to have intended it.

O'Neill's play is a nostalgic look back on the events of a midsummer's eve in turn-of-the-century Connecticut that leads to the coming of age of a young man. An earlier M. G. M. screen version of Ah, Wilderness!, directed by Clarence Brown, succeeded in capturing the coming-of-age experience, showing 1912 as a simpler time and treating the values and sentiments of the period with seriousness and respect.

Mamoulian's musical film version loses the experiential essence of the story amidst cinematic effect which contributes to the overblown artificiality of the

Hollywood fantasy version of historical reality. Brown understood that with this piece, less is more. Mamoulian, typically, bloated a simple story with visual excess. What he achieved in visual splendor and taste was done at the expense of honest feeling and insight. What we get instead is Mamoulian showing us his cleverness and skill at manipulation.

Mamoulian felt that there was no point in redoing Ah, Wilderness! unless something new could be accomplished with it:

The only valid reason for transforming Ah, Wilderness[!] into a musical would be to tell that story in richer, more colorful and more imaginative terms, without sacrificing any of its true values, but, on the contrary, bringing to it more beauty and excitement than was there before.³²

The essence of the piece mattered less than demonstrating his added contribution. As a result, Mamoulian calls attention to additions and discards the rest. Like so much of his work, this film never takes on a life of its own.

Walter Huston sings the opening song, "Our Home Town," shifting imperceptibly from song to sprechgesang to speech as he takes us from the street exterior to the house interior. He moves constantly, and so does the camera. We see the seamless transitions Mamoulian had originally introduced to the stage with Oklahoma! and Carousel as integration of elements, now reintroduced into the film musical. The introductory number is highly presentational. The actors seem to speak their lines for

the audience's benefit rather than for one another. Motivation for behavior is lacking. Throughout the film the actors seem to have very little reason for being seen except to deliver their lines.

Danville, Connecticut, is depicted with great opulence, and the scale of everything in the town is oversized. The graduation scene, not depicted in the original play but dramatized in the earlier film, has no meaning in this version. It tells us nothing about the idealism of youth. It is little more than a checklist point to be covered in the dramatic action of the piece. Instead, Mamoulian diverts us with tableaux vivants recreating famous paintings of the American revolution and other cliched scenes of Americana from painting. The effect is humorous, but to no end other than showing us how clever he is.

The picnic scene and other scenes surrounding the July fourth celebration are equally loaded with recognizable symbols of Americana, the tableaux vivants being an especially favored pictorial device. The picnic itself proceeds, like the relay in "Isn't it Romantic?" from Love Me Tonight, in which the camera follows a song as it gets passed along from one party to another. Again, we have a visual idea of a Fourth of July celebration rather than the characters' experience of one.

The other major contribution Mamoulian focusses on is the sequence beginning in the barroom and ending in

the room of Richard, the protagonist, with his father. Mamoulian set out to achieve something technically innovative by having the bar girl, Belle, change into a glamorous vision out of a dream as intoxication increases. The transformation, as we see it unfold before us, is reminiscent of the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde that Mamoulian created fifteen years earlier. It is a stunning visual effect but renders no insight into the experience of the characters. It exists solely for its own sake. In the desperate need to show us his imagination, Mamoulian gives us no opportunity to exercise our own. As an artistic and rhetorical creation, this film does not allow for collaboration between source and receiver. The experience is one-sided. In order to achieve something more deeply felt, Mamoulian would have had to allow his actors to become the focus rather than his pictorial imagery so that we, in turn, could get involved with them rather than just be dazzled by visual effect.

The source material for the film understandably appealed to Mamoulian. The protagonist is an iconoclastic young man of extraordinary intellectual gifts (although not as Mickey Rooney played him), whose ambitious career goals are both activated and jeopardized by libidinal drive. Like Jekyll and his Muriel, Richard Miller and Muriel McComber must control their sexual urges to satisfy conventional *mores*. The frustration is too much

for Richard when, through some comical misunderstandings over a letter, he believes Muriel has rejected him and he accepts an invitation to spend the evening with "a couple of swift babies." In a tavern in a run-down part of Danville, reminiscent of Mamoulian's setting for Diadem Court, Richard meets Belle. Belle is a "performer." When Richard tries to suggest that she adopt a more acceptable lifestyle, she takes offense. She is sexually free and unashamed of her unconventional lifestyle and values. She is the sexually alluring woman of the Mamoulian demi-monde. She is the older woman-actress who doesn't want to stay at home to take care of husband and children.

When Richard becomes intoxicated, we see Belle through his distorted vision, as a dream, an image, an idea. It is reminiscent of the subjective opening to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in which the camera becomes the protagonist and, in essence, the filmmaker. Mamoulian's image of women as sexual beings is more frightening than alluring, and so is Richard's experience of her. Sex is intriguing but scary, something to run away from.

The synopsis of the film's shooting script reads:

Growing pains and summer's influence create emotional turmoil in 17-year old Richard Miller's being, but, after being suspected of various indecent primitive urges by his best girl, her father, and his own family, he proves himself to be an average fine American youth. The situation leads to his engagement to a nice girl, and a closer understanding with his proud father.³³

Mamoulian is able to treat his central theme of the hidden "animalistic" being underlying the superficial

world of appearances where a person can draw upon the hidden impulses to arrive at a higher, more spiritual state of being and greater achievement; the latter have been impossible without descent into the former.

Unlike the Richard of O'Neill's play, and of Brown's film version, Mamoulian's Richard, as portrayed by Mickey Rooney, never believably turns inward and undergoes any transformation. The coming of age is told to us, but we never experience it. Mamoulian deletes the scenes leading to the inflammatory graduation speech that establishes Richard's character as intellectually precocious and idealistic; enraged by the hypocrisy of bourgeois society. He espouses free love. He is a millennialist, like Jekyll. But Mamoulian's Richard is merely a buffoon.

In almost all reviews of the film and in marketing surveys conducted at pre-release screenings, Rooney is strongly criticized for showing off and overacting to the detriment of the film. Rooney apparently hated working on the film and was undoubtedly determined to give whatever performance he liked. Mamoulian, as director, shares the blame for allowing such a performance. Alton Cook in the World Telegram, summed up the consensus of reviewers of the film when he said:

. . . the picture becomes a self-conscious bumbler in quest of Americana, a quality it seldom achieves.³⁴

Although completed in October 1946, the film was withheld from release until May 1948. M. G. M.'s

marketing department had the title changed from Ah! Wilderness to Summer Holiday even though marketing reports showed that audiences preferred the title Summertime over either of the other two. The film went \$405,000 over budget and because of delays, Mamoulian received a total of \$163,400 to direct, less than he received ten years earlier to direct High, Wide and Handsome. Walter Huston and Mickey Rooney each received \$60,000 for their work. Mamoulian's next and last completed film, Silk Stockings, a decade later, also for Arthur Freed and M. G. M., would earn him only \$53,090, while the film's star, Fred Astaire, received \$150,000 for his work.

Between October 1946, and January 1949, Mamoulian directed for neither the stage nor the screen. The Screen Directors Guild was embroiled in an internal political struggle, as a result of impending external pressures from Washington to rid itself of Communist influence. Matters came to a head in October 1947, when Cecil B. DeMille called for the SDG to require all members to sign a loyalty oath. SDG President Joseph L. Mankiewicz rallied the support of many directors, including Mamoulian, in a much publicized battle. DeMille was denounced for attempting to create a blacklist. Mamoulian made a passionate statement at the final public confrontation over this issue, at the Beverly Hills Hotel on October 22, where ballots were cast to decide the

matter, condemning DeMille for perverting the very essence of what this country stands for.

Oddly, the archives of the Theatre Guild contain a letter dated January 20, 1948, from Theresa Helburn to Mamoulian expressing regret at his not being available to direct a new musical based on Lawrence Langner and Armina Marshall's play, The Pursuit of Happiness, with music by Harry Warren, composer of Summer Holiday. Apparently Warren would not do the play without Mamoulian, so Helburn was distressed at Mamoulian's refusal. In 1950, Mamoulian did direct the musical, but with Morton Gould as composer. The musical was Arms and the Girl.

Simultaneously, the Theatre Guild was about to begin threatening Mamoulian about not returning with any frequency to maintain the quality of Oklahoma! and Carousel.

If Henry Sherek can cut off Peter Ashmore's per cent because he is absent from London for two months I should think we could do something like that with Rouben Mamoulian, since he has not looked at CAROUSEL or OKLAHOMA for a long time. When we went to Oklahoma his expenses were paid there--and he came for obvious publicity reasons. I believe that he has not checked CAROUSEL since the opening, and has not seen the New York OKLAHOMA company for two years, nor has he had anything to do with the London OKLAHOMA company. Why can't we do something about this?³⁵

By July 1948, Mamoulian seems to have complied with the Guild's wishes to "brush up" Oklahoma! and Carousel. But he had a grievance of his own against the Theatre Guild. The long-standing dispute over proper credit for

the show came to a head again in July 1948 when

Mamouljian's attorney wrote to the Guild that:

I have been instructed by my client, Mr. Rouben Mamouljian, to notify you that unless you promptly discontinue breaking the advertising and billing provisions of his agreements with you with respect to OKLAHOMA and CAROUSEL, I am to take such legal action as I deem necessary in order to protect my client's interests.

You may advise your advertising head and his men on the road that my client will not tolerate a single further infraction in regard to the foregoing.

I further wish to inform you that Mr. Mamouljian has engaged a clipping service and he fully expects that all press releases issued by your company or under its auspices will make reference to him as director whenever reference is made either to the Guild as producer, or to the authors of either of the aforementioned plays.

Very truly yours,

William B. Jaffe³⁶

In February 1947, Mamouljian and Langner exchanged correspondence about the possibility of producing a musical version of The Barber of Seville. This, along with an updated version of Carmen, would remain unfulfilled projects of Mamouljian's during the final two decades of his active career. Mamouljian wanted to mount an updated version of The Barber of Seville for John Raitt, Carousel's Billy Bigelow. Mamouljian responded to a script Langner had sent to him entitled, "The Barber," by writing back:

I am very disappointed in Mr. Eager's scripts of "The Barber." He seems to be a young man of talent, but I think he went off on a completely wrong track. I could have never dreamt that anybody would want to transform the gay, romantic, effervescent, Barbieri, into a political treatise on

democracy versus fascism. That kind of treatment is as out of place in Rossini's opera as a lamb chop would be in the button hole of a spring suit. The best thing about the Barber and most of its charm comes from the perfect blending of a fairytale-like, carefree text and music. I think the task of improving the story of "The Barber" does not consist of stuffing it with political significance, transforming the deliciously naive and romantic Count Almaviva into a specious liberal running away from the police, etc., but in freshening up and enriching the joyful and humorous tapestry of Beaumarchais' tale. The music and the characters of "The Barber of Seville" are filled with sunshine, blue skies, humor and romance.³⁷

Langner, apparently, wanted to do the piece only if it was updated, possibly to modern-day Spain. Mamouljian also wanted to do a musical version of Manon Lescaut. To this idea, Helburn responded:

It seems to me that Manon is more picture material than theatre. I think it would be fairly difficult to project that kind of romanticism today in the theatre, and very expensive, but doubtless you have a definite production idea in mind. . . . I can remember everyone talking MANON LESCAUT way back in 1935 in Hollywood. It's amazing they haven't done it yet. I don't know what it has to say to our audiences today but perhaps it would provide the complete escape they are looking for!³⁸

Langner rejected this idea as too old-fashioned.³⁹ He suggested it be rewritten "with modern psychology."

When Mamouljian did finally direct again after the three-year hiatus, his troubles began anew. In January 1949, he directed Leaf and Bough. Produced by Charles Heidt, a major financial backer of the Theatre Guild, the play ran for only three performances, at the Cort Theatre in Jamaica, New York, where Cafe Tomaza had suffered a similar fate twenty-one years earlier. Leaf and Bough was the first Broadway production of the young playwright

Joseph Hayes, who went on to greater success in 1954, with his play The Desperate Hours. Set in rural Indiana, the play concerns the struggles of an impoverished young, romantic couple to rise above the negative influences of their environment. The lyrical quality of the writing was compared to that of Tennessee Williams.⁴⁰ Critics condemned the production for overwhelming the simple, delicate play. Mamoulian's name appeared larger than that of the playwright, actors, and even the play itself at the theatre; precisely the kind of billing he had wanted with the Theatre Guild.

Mamoulian tried to assert total control over the production, as he always had, by suggesting major cuts and rewriting of the play. When Mamoulian found Hayes both unwilling and unable to alter the play to his specifications, Mamoulian blamed the production's failure on Hayes' inability to follow his guidance. He reminded Hayes that "the more distinguished the playwright, the more anxious he should be to profit from a seasoned director's artistic judgment. Even the difficult and enigmatic Eugene O'Neill, Mamoulian explained, had been willing to cut. . . ."⁴¹

But the critics laid blame primarily on Mamoulian. Joseph Hayes commented recently:

Because of my painful experience with Rouben Mamoulian on a play which had already been produced in Dallas by Margo Jones (beautifully) and had already won the prestigious Arts of the Theatre Award--I almost refused to dramatize The Desperate Hours five years later.

Rouben Mamoulian never once discussed the theme and/or meaning of LEAF AND BOUGH. He played the role of a European "manager" throughout, reminding me over and over of his vast experience and my lack of same. . . . The play on Broadway bore little resemblance to the play in Dallas, where it had reduced audiences to tears.⁴²

After the failure of Leaf and Bough, Mamoulian either accepted no offers or received none for most of 1949. By the fall of 1949, he finally agreed to direct a musical version of Lawrence Langner and Armina Marshall's comedy about the American Revolution, The Pursuit of Happiness. The play was turned into the musical Arms and the Girl, by composer Morton Gould and lyricist Dorothy Fields, with book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields and Rouben Mamoulian. Michael Kidd choreographed, and the cast included Nanette Fabray, Georges Guetary, and Pearl Bailey. Mamoulian told a story of how at the time rehearsals for Arms and the Girl were to begin, he lunched with Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson. Weill and Anderson had been looking for a director for their new musical collaboration based on Alan Paton's novel, Cry, the Beloved Country. There, Mamoulian said, Weill and Anderson solicited advice on how to develop the story for the theatre with the ulterior motive of getting Mamoulian to direct the show himself. They were supposedly able to do so in spite of Mamoulian's commitment to direct Arms and the Girl.⁴³ It was probably no secret in professional circles, if not actually reported in the press, that Weill and Anderson were working on this project and in

need of a director. Mamoulian probably knew that the meeting would lead to more than he revealed in his account of the incident. Back in January 1946, Mamoulian and Weill had corresponded discussing the possibility of Mamoulian's directing Street Scene, Weill's American opera based on the play by Elmer Rice.⁴⁴ For undetermined reasons, probably scheduling conflicts, Mamoulian did not direct even though, as Weill stated, ". . . this show is 'up your alley.'"⁴⁵ The two men were not strangers to each other or to each other's work.

Mamoulian told Langner that he had agreed to direct the Weill-Anderson musical and that rehearsals for Arms and the Girl would have to be postponed for eight weeks. Langner was understandably not pleased and explained what a financial burden paying an ensemble of artists and technicians an additional eight weeks for not working would be. Mamoulian, used to running up costly delays on films, replied to Langner that if that was the case, then that was what would have to be done. When Mamoulian returned eight weeks later to direct Arms and the Girl, it was the last production he was ever hired by the Theatre Guild, or anyone else, to direct on stage.

In Lost in the Stars, the new title for Cry, the Beloved Country, Mamoulian once again directed a musical based on life in the black community; this time in apartheid South Africa. Urban and rural life are contrasted as evil and good, animalistic and spiritual,

man-made and natural. Generational conflict, soon to become a major theme in drama of the 1950's, is a central theme in Lost in the Stars. For once, sex is not the catalyst igniting conflict. Even so, the corruption of the city becomes symbolized, in part, by a sensual female nightclub performer, as contrasted to the madonna-like Irina, wife of Absalom Kumalo, the young protagonist who succumbs to the pressures of a hostile environment.

Again, Mamoulian wished to show how even though faced with oppressive circumstances, man still has the ability to choose between acting on his baser instincts or on his higher ones.

Mamoulian had conceptual disagreements with Anderson over plot, characterization, and tone. Anderson wanted a biting political condemnation of a current, social situation. Weill was no stranger to composing music for political theatre. But Mamoulian wanted to de-politicize the content. He felt that having just come through the Second World War and with the atomic age looming, people could only take so much hate. He argued people went to the theatre for something gentle and hopeful. Mamoulian was ultimately able to have his way with Anderson, no doubt because Weill and Anderson felt they could not afford to lose him. They had had great difficulty getting financial backing for the production. No one felt the subject matter, especially as a musical, had any commercial potential. Finally, Weill, Anderson, and other

members of their Playwrights Company had to put thousands of dollars of their own money up as backing. Mamoulian declined to invest in the show, but did receive a directing fee of \$5000 plus two percent of weekly gross box-office receipts and seven-and-one-half percent of the show's net profits, as compared to the eight percent of the weekly gross Weill and Anderson received. And, although the show enjoyed a run of 281 performances, production costs exceeded the weekly gross, causing the show to close at a significant loss.

The production was expensively mounted; many reviewers complained it was excessively so. Mamoulian had George Jenkins design two-dozen stylized, suggestive settings that rolled in and out. A "Greek chorus" of villagers flanked the stage commenting verbally and nonverbally on the main dramatic action. Mamoulian had the set spill out past the proscenium arch, necessitating the removal of the first row of seats in the theatre. He also made extensive use of human sculptural tableaux to decorate the scenes:

. . . picturesque groups break their poses as the lights dim and run to form other equally pictorial groupings.⁴⁶

Reviews were evenly distributed between positive and negative. Audiences were moved by the piece. But many critics found fault with Anderson for losing the political impact of the novel as well as failing to capture its poetic beauty. Mamoulian told Todd Duncan,

who played Stephen Kumalo, the country preacher-father of the accused murderer Absalom, that his character was Gandhi-like. Mamoulian forced a major jurisdictional confrontation with Anderson during rehearsals over this issue when Anderson violated Mamoulian's territory by coaching Duncan, confusing him as to whose directions to follow.

John Mason Brown's review captures what was the essence of the criticism voiced by many critics:

That Mr. Mamoulian has done a stunning, stylized job I have already admitted. . . . Unable to make use of Mr. Paton's narrative style, Mr. Mamoulian has had to reach inescapably for a theatrical substitute. What he offers is a treatment similar to that he employed unforgettably in "Porgy and Bess." Although his Negro choruses, carefully posed against the proscenium, are effective they are far too studied to serve as equivalents for Mr. Paton's prose. His strivings for the simple are strangely elaborate. They are not art seeming to be artless, but art at its most deliberate, hence artful.⁴⁷

Brown also criticized Duncan as not being the simple country parson. About Duncan's Kumalo he complains:

He is sophisticated, not naive. He exudes prosperity rather than poverty. He is as neat and spruce in his well-cut gray suit as if he shepherded the richest of Anglican parishioners in the most fashionable of churches. If there is little about him of the old country parson described by Mr. Paton as wearing "black clothes. . . green with age" and a collar "brown with age or dirt," there is also nothing of the Zulu.⁴⁸

After years in Hollywood, Mamoulian returned with an M. G. M. vision of the world which he had helped to define.

Other critics focussed on the superficiality of such an approach:

Rouben Mamoulian's direction, while skilful and ingenious. . . seems more of a blackboard demonstration in stage mechanics than a searching portrayal of fear and frustration.⁴⁹

and:

. . . empty and arty, dwelling on surface details instead of digging for the guts.⁵⁰

When Mamoulian returned to Arms and the Girl, an already tense relationship with the management and company became exacerbated as rehearsals got underway. Morton Gould recalled that Dorothy Fields and Nanette Fabray, in particular, complained about Mamoulian, using the same kinds of words Joseph Hayes used to describe his experience on Leaf and Bough. He assumed the role of European régisieur expecting obedience to his will.⁵¹ Rehearsals were held up for several days when Fabray entered the hospital for stress-related complaints. To this day she refuses to discuss her experience with Mamoulian because of lingering ill feelings. Much as Hyde tyrannized Ivy, Mamoulian tried to "break" her, as he had done many actresses who did not submit to his control. He felt that her broad performance style directed toward the audience was inappropriate for an integrated musical. Yet, criticisms of the production focussed on its mindlessness and conventional musical-farce style; a style Mamoulian had professed to work against. The production was replete with sight gags and, in true showman form, the spectacular entrance of George Washington on a live horse.

In spite of the mutual antagonisms and dissatisfactions amongst the various collaborators, Arms and the Girl opened February 2, 1950, at the Forty-Sixth Street Theatre and closed after 134 performances. At the age of fifty-two, Mamoulian unknowingly had reached the end of a distinguished stage career. He was arrogant, difficult to work with, irresponsible with budgetary constraints, and no longer the young genius of the theatre. He was, arguably, as Andrew Sarris characterized him, the "innovator who ran out of innovations."⁵²

Chapter 9: DECLINE: THE FIFTIES AND BEYOND

In the 1950s Mamoulian succeeded in seeing only one project to completion; the 1957 film Silk Stockings. From 1961 until his death in 1987, Mamoulian did not work again. In an interview for the New York Herald Tribune, Mamoulian discussed his plans for the future stating that unless he came across:

. . . "something [a film] I'm nuts about, I would rather do another play." Movies to him are incestuous and he speaks of them as suffering from inbreeding, from the mating of one box office hit with another. "All the characters in one film are related to characters in other films, not to people in the world," he pointed out. It is for this reason, he believes, that people welcome the realism of foreign pictures like "Open City" and "The Bicycle Thief," or the poetic approach of such films as "The Fallen Idol" and "the Third Man."¹

These, however, could be criticisms of Mamoulian's work. For Mamoulian, it was not lack of imagination, but difficulty in realizing character and plot beyond merely an idea of character and plot, where they take on the full dimensions of life.

During the rehearsals for Arms and the Girl Mamoulian had rejected an offer by the Metropolitan Opera to direct The Barber of Seville. During the 1950s, he and Maxwell Anderson planned to produce a new version of The Barber of Seville, but it progressed no further than an idea. Similarly, Mamoulian had plans to rewrite the opera

Carmen for the Broadway musical stage, with a film version to follow. With Carmen, Mamoulian was able to secure financial backing for a film to be shot in Spain in 1955, but this too, failed to materialize.² Rudolf Bing, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, also offered Carmen to Mamoulian to direct. But he was not interested in directing opera within the constraints of an institution like the Metropolitan Opera. Bing wanted Mamoulian to cast Rise Stevens as Carmen. Mamoulian could not see her as his ideal Carmen. He wanted an actress who could sing, not a singer who perhaps could act but did not look the part as he envisioned it.

In spite of criticisms Anderson received at the hands of Mamoulian's manipulations on Lost in the Stars, he and Weill made plans to collaborate on a musical version of Huckleberry Finn. A number of songs had already been written when Weill died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1950. In addition to the operatic collaborations, Mamoulian worked with Anderson on a script for a musical version of Faust. Three decades earlier, Mamoulian had made his operatic debut directing the Gounod opera in Rochester. He had spent the better part of his career recreating the story in myriad metamorphoses. In 1936, Jesse Lasky had wanted Mamoulian to direct a film version of Faust, but the time was not right. It seems only fitting that late in his career he should return to the legend in its pure form. Mamoulian

and Anderson completed a script for their modern-day Faust entitled The Devil's Hornpipe. Never produced as such, the play emerged highly transformed as the 1958 Charles Lederer film, Never Steal Anything Small, starring James Cagney.

In 1950, Mamoulian re-edited the film The Wild Heart and reshot three of its scenes as a favor to its producer, David O. Selznick. He most likely did so with hope that the favor would be returned with a film offer. Selznick's wife, Jennifer Jones, starred in the film, made in England under the title, Gone to Earth. The film, made by Michael Powell, director of The Red Shoes, is about a gypsy girl whose free spirit clashes with that of her minister husband. The film was poorly received by critics and the public, and prevented Mamoulian from capitalizing on his favor to Selznick.

In 1953, Mamoulian staged an evening of entertainment for Adolf Zukor's Golden Jubilee celebration at the Hollywood Palladium. In 1954, he directed Los Angeles and San Francisco revivals of Carousel, followed by a 1955 State Department tour of Europe with Oklahoma!

In September 1956, Mamoulian returned to work for Arthur Freed at M. G. M., now headed by Dore Schary. He was to direct the film version of Cole Porter's musical, Silk Stockings. The musical is based on the 1939 Lubitsch film, Ninotchka, which had starred Greta Garbo. The Broadway production of Silk Stockings was not one of

Porter's greatest critical successes; nevertheless it enjoyed a modestly successful run, starring Hildegard Knef and Don Ameche. For the film, Mamoulian worked with M. G. M. dancing star Cyd Charisse and managed to convince a reluctant Fred Astaire to co-star in the film. Hugh Fordin, in his book on the Freed Unit at M. G. M., stated that Astaire:

. . . had never met Mamoulian and was somewhat apprehensive about working with him.³

Mamoulian succeeded in charming Astaire. But Astaire was not the only one apprehensive about working with him. When Freed announced to the studio executives that he wanted Mamoulian to direct Silk Stockings:

The reaction was unanimous and boiled down to "Arthur, not again!" On the third floor [where top management had their offices] no one cared even to remember Mamoulian's last picture of ten years ago, Summer Holiday.⁴

Fordin goes on to reveal that:

During the making of Silk Stockings there were frequent disputes between Mamoulian and Freed. Exceedingly nervous in face of the negative attitude of the third floor and not completely convinced that Mamoulian would bring the picture in on time, Freed often displayed great irritability. . . . When Mamoulian came back to M-G-M for Silk Stockings, he was well aware of his past reputation and was determined to do away with it, once and for all.⁵

The Freed Unit at M. G. M. had always been a semi-autonomous creative entity, enjoying an advantageous profit-sharing arrangement with the studio. With Silk Stockings, Freed officially became an independent producer, heading Arthur Freed Productions, financed by

M. G. M.'s parent company, Loew's Inc. Mamoulian, aware of his status, sent Freed a congratulatory note on the new production company, to which Freed replied reassuringly:

Dear Rouben:

All I can say is that I am very happy and proud to be associated with you again and I am looking forward to the unfolding of this picture under your direction with the utmost pleasure and confidence. Good luck!

Sincerely,

AF:ha

Arthur Freed⁶

Reading between the lines, the subtext to be inferred is: both in spite of your past reputation and because of it, I am happy to give you another chance. With the pressure by Loew's executives in New York to produce at the lowest possible cost, selecting Mamoulian to direct may have been not only an artistic decision but also a financial one. Mamoulian's reputation for extravagance and waste, not to mention personal difficulties, had made him unemployable. This unemployability made his market value as a director drop drastically in the 1950s. He could now be hired at bargain rates, compared with other directors of his stature and even compared to his own past earning history.

On his two previous musical films, Summer Holiday and High, Wide and Handsome, Mamoulian received over \$160,000 and \$170,000 respectively. For Silk Stockings, ten and twenty years after these two films, Mamoulian was paid only \$50,000, and this was the result of extra

shooting days. His salary had been budgeted originally at \$44,678. In contrast, Astaire received \$150,000 for the film. Cyd Charisse was paid \$75,000, and even Janis Paige, in a supporting role, received \$40,000. The film went \$136,433 over budget, took forty-five days to film, eight more than the scheduled thirty-seven. Mamoulian used fifteen rehearsal days where eight had been allotted. The second unit, working on dance and musical production numbers, was allotted fifty-three rehearsal days and took seventy-four. The unit manager's report indicates Mamoulian took many sick days.⁷

From the start, Mamoulian sent lengthy memos to Freed, to the writers, to other departmental heads not only describing in detail how he wanted everything, but in a typically patronizing tone, explaining the meaning of the story and how the various production elements should be approached. Riddling them with clichés like "not seeing the forest for the trees," "spring follows winter," and references to Joan of Arc not listening to her voices, Mamoulian handed down his ideas to his collaborators encouraging for formulaic characterizations and plot development. For Mamoulian, the theme of the film was "all people are alike deep down."⁸ He returned to his belief that people are basically good and yearn to act on their higher impulses and dreams, but that evil influences in the environment test people's will power to rise above outside pressures and listen to their inner

voices, like Joan of Arc. For Mamoulian, this was a lifelong struggle, and the essence of every conflict he chose to dramatize.

In order not to attempt to duplicate what Lubitsch had done successfully with Ninotchka, Mamoulian decided that the ideas and plot would be expressed in terms of music and stylized movement. The film succeeds most when it is most stylized, during musical and dance production numbers by Fred Astaire and the chorus, and the solo ballet of Cyd Charisse as she dresses. In the non-musical sequences of plot exposition, the realistic scenes, the film lacks dramatic credibility.

Here, at last, is Mamoulian's strip-tease in reverse. Ninotchka, after purchasing a pair of silk stockings, disrobes in her hotel room and then dances with the new lingerie she has bought, caressing it sensually as she puts it on, the way Garbo had caressed the objects in the room at the inn in Queen Christina. Mamoulian titillates us with silhouetted images of a nude Cyd Charisse dancing behind gossamer curtains. The censors took note and warned against any full frontal or profile intimation of nudity.

Mamoulian was able to make use of the wide-screen format that he was contracted to use, but found it unwieldy to frame his images within its extended width. The dance routines make the best use of the film's dimensions to make free lateral movements.

Mamoulian also repeated a device he had introduced in Applause. The film opens with the camera following Fred Astaire's feet as they emerge from a taxi, proceed through a revolving door and continue into an elegant hotel lobby. Mamoulian had used this device to expressionistic effect in Applause, when he showed the legs and feet of the chorus girls, and later those of April and her sailor fiancé. In Applause they signify the trade of the chorus girls, and in the scene with April and her sailor, streetwalking, leading to a pickup. The black-and-white photography creates the burlesque underworld where people are reduced to flesh and body parts. In Silk Stockings, the same device is used to make reference to the legs and feet of Fred Astaire--his signature in the magical world of Metrocolor. It also serves to introduce us to his character in the film, Steve Canfield, the Hollywood director-choreographer. Furthermore it creates a distancing device, much as the opening of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde calls attention to the dual identities of the central character as himself and as the embodiment of the filmmaker as one of many character dualities in the film. The opening of Love Me Tonight leads to the entrance of Maurice Chevalier, the entertainer, outlined by a crack in the wall topped off by the famous Chevalier straw hat resting on a hook on the wall. Whenever Mamoulian directed very famous actors, he provided them with a grand theatrical entrance, in

close-up, acknowledging the renewal of an intimate relationship between star and audience.

In Silk Stockings, as in Summer Holiday, plot and character development now replaced by music and dance, are lost. Music and dance were supposed to be more direct means of reaching the emotions thereby. Instead, the effect is little more than an artful display. But audiences and critics praised the film as an inventive, enjoyable entertainment, and Mamoulian restored his value as a marketable commodity.

Ever since Sam Goldwyn saw the New York stage version of Porgy and Bess in 1935, he had wanted to produce a film version of Porgy and Bess. He considered Gershwin the greatest American composer and thought Heyward's libretto the best of any musical he had heard. Since Gershwin's death in 1939 and Heyward's in 1942, legal battles involving the two estates had held up the acquisition of film rights to the opera. Ira Gershwin felt the piece would lose impact on the screen. But finally, in 1957, Goldwyn secured the film rights and, according to Arthur Marx:

What he was striving to give the world was a masterpiece--something of a film memorial to George Gershwin.⁹

Goldwyn was well aware of Mamoulian's long-standing association with the work and its predecessor. The two men had had a less than amicable experience working together on We Live Again twenty-three years earlier.

Mamoulian was not Goldwyn's first choice for director. Before Mamoulian, he had tried to get Elia Kazan, Frank Capra, and King Vidor. Goldwyn knew that because of Mamoulian's history with the piece, he would be willing to work for a low salary just for the chance to fulfill a dream. Mamoulian's professional difficulties made him an inexpensive director; another appealing consideration.

With the success of Silk Stockings, Mamoulian was able to secure Irving Lazar as his agent, but Lazar was able to negotiate only \$75,000 for Mamoulian to direct Porgy and Bess. Much as Goldwyn wanted Mamoulian to direct the film, he wanted Mamoulian to come to him and beg for the job. Mamoulian wanted the same from Goldwyn. Each knew how much the other wanted the offer to take place so when the two men met in Goldwyn's office neither would raise the subject. Mamoulian felt a great sense of victory when he held out the longer of the two, forcing Goldwyn to bring up the subject.

The two men reached contractual agreement in November 1957. Filming was scheduled to begin the following July. In the intervening months, Mamoulian spent much time in preproduction; planning and overseeing the execution of set and costume designs, sound pre-recording and rehearsal of musical numbers. He spent two weeks in New York auditioning actors, and in Hollywood claims he was involved in persuading Sidney Poitier,

Dorothy Dandridge, Pearl Bailey, and other principal performers to act in the film.

During the early hours of July 2, 1958, the day actual filming was to have begun, Stage 8 at the Goldwyn Studios, the second largest sound stage in Hollywood, burned down. The set of Catfish Row and all of the costumes were destroyed. The fire department suspected arson by someone politically opposed to the film, but no charges were brought. Following the fire, Goldwyn announced that he would rebuild the sets and costumes, sparing no expense:

In addition to the lost time and money that could never be fully recovered, and the hundreds of people thrown temporarily out of jobs, the fire had a dangerous side effect: it gave Sam [Goldwyn] time to worry. . . . What worried him most of all was Rouben Mamoulian. What did a Russian know about life on Catfish Row? And did he really have the right rapport with the all-black cast? From reports he'd heard, several important members of the cast weren't too happy about his imperious ways of handling them.¹⁰

On July 27, Goldwyn fired Mamoulian from the picture and hired Otto Preminger. As the film's new director, Preminger got a \$150,00 fee, twice that of Mamoulian. By 1958, Preminger was one of Hollywood's most commercially successful directors. He had just filmed an all-black cast version of Bizet's opera Carmen, entitled Carmen Jones. It had many of the same cast members as Porgy and Bess. Carmen Jones was a critical and popular success. It was also a cinematic realization of something Mamoulian had tried to get produced for nearly a decade. This was

the second time Mamoulian had been fired from a film and the second time he had been replaced by Preminger.

What followed was a well-publicized and bitter legal battle between Mamoulian and Goldwyn. Goldwyn paid Mamoulian the entire contractual fee for directing the film, but this was not what Mamoulian was after. He felt used and deceived and hoped to render Goldwyn powerless as Goldwyn had done to him. He determined that no studio head should have the right to act in such a capricious way. He argued that he had performed his duties as director in a more than satisfactory manner, with Goldwyn himself often expressing great pleasure with his preparations. Mamoulian set out to challenge the authority of studio heads to act in a way that in any other industry would be legal grounds for grievance and reinstatement.

Mamoulian also wanted screen credit for the eight months of work he had contributed to the film. He demanded that his own name precede that of Preminger, just as he had preceded Preminger chronologically and artistically in setting the film on its course to completion.

Almost immediately, the Screen Directors Guild took a mediating role in the dispute. In a special board meeting held July 29, 1958, Mamoulian stated:

I want to say that actually I would never have thought of imposing my own personal problem or my own fight upon the Guild. I am kind of used to serving it, not being served. Even in the face of

this situation I wouldn't have bothered you if I did not have a deep feeling that this thing in which I am the focal point is of great importance to the whole Guild. I think it is important to the whole industry. I don't think it is stretching the truth to say I think it is important to our national life --whether we still have a democracy or whether we have a dictatorship.¹¹

Mamouljian went on to explain that he had learned he had been fired by reading the newspapers. He responded immediately, contacting the press and denouncing Goldwyn's behavior. He continued to explain to the SDG how he had gone to New York, at Goldwyn's request, months earlier, to oversee the auditioning of some three hundred actors, taking two weeks and carrying out the favor with no payment except the reimbursement of his hotel bill. He mentioned that he had accepted a very low fee to direct the film because he badly wanted to do it.

Mamouljian went on to explain how the principal actors who were approached for the film all turned it down initially because they felt it would be injurious to their race to be presented as gamblers, drug dealers, drug addicts, prostitutes, and beggars. When the film was finally made, the MPPDA apparently agreed, objecting particularly to the depiction of cohabitation, and the sympathetic treatment of an unpunished murder by the central male character. Mamouljian told how, one day at Goldwyn's house, he had convinced Sidney Poitier, on the basis of his integrity, to accept the role of Porgy after Poitier had initially turned it down:

The next day, Goldwyn arranged a press conference

for Mr. Poitier to which I was not invited. Poitier was handed a statement prepared by Goldwyn. Poitier threw it away and stated that he had turned it down, he did not believe in it, but in view of what I told him of my conception of it, now he has changed his mind.¹²

Mamoulian goes on to describe how he had worked with the designers on the sets and costumes, and with Andre Previn, the film's musical director, and with the film's vocal coach. He directed the film's prerecording of the entire musical score.

After establishing his willingness to continue working on the film and help with the reconstruction after the fire, while laid off, without pay, Mamoulian explained how he had engaged the public relations firm of Brennan and Morgan and instructed them to follow whatever procedures Goldwyn's publicity department deemed acceptable. In return, Mamoulian complained, his name was consistently omitted from any pre-release publicity about the film. In spite of this treatment, Mamoulian stated that with his newly engaged press agent, Russell Birdwell, he continued to respect Goldwyn's right, as owner of the film rights, to dictate the publicity for the film. However, Mamoulian felt free to create publicity on his own behalf by discussing his career and matters of interest excluding Porgy and Bess and did so. In particular, he spoke out against the showing of films on television with the belief that it would lead to the demise of films as an art form. This statement apparently angered Goldwyn, who was then engaged in selling the

rights to his films for television and stood to make a large sum of money.

Mamouljian's agent, Irving Lazar, came to Mamouljian's home advising him to "crawl back on his hands and knees"¹³ to Goldwyn. Mamouljian said, however, that Mrs. Goldwyn reported to him at a party one night that her husband felt sorry and contrite for reprimanding Mamouljian. The very next day, after this party, Mamouljian read about his having been fired from the film and Preminger replacing him. Mamouljian concluded his case to the SDG by stating:

I have only one principle in life. I feel what is right is right and I will fight for it if I have to die for it. I am not going to buckle down to this toy dictator. Even if he pays me in full, I am going to sue him. I have already directed 3/4 of this picture already. I cannot conceive of somebody else's walking in and shooting this and saying "directed by." I deserve credit for everything that has happened as of today, which is one hour and 15 minutes of music and singing, script, costumes, etc.¹⁴

Goldwyn refused to appear before the SDG in their offices stating that he would discuss the matter with them if they wished to come to him. They did not and he never testified.

Meanwhile, Mamouljian's publicity man continued to plant anti-Goldwyn items in the newspapers and trades.

It seemed as if Mamouljian had sentiment on his side--until the last trick he pulled. He called a press conference and produced one of the black bit players in the cast, [Leigh Whipper] who made a statement clearly implying that Otto Preminger was anti-Negro.

This backfired on Mamouljian. Everyone in Hollywood who knew Preminger was aware that this was not so--and particularly the black performers who'd been

directed by him in Carmen Jones.¹⁵

Mamouljian's press agent, Russell Birdwell, had organized a press conference in which Leigh Whipper announced his resignation from the film, stating the potential danger to blacks if Porgy and Bess were to be placed in unsympathetic hands. Whipper stated that he had worked with Mamouljian on Porgy and Porgy and Bess and that

Other theatrical presentations of this story have trampled the Negro in degradation.¹⁶

Whipper continued:

I believe that the proposed PORGY AND BESS is now in hands unsympathetic to my people.¹⁷

Preminger's attorney complained bitterly to the SDG about Whipper's accusations, labelling them a smear against his client's reputation, and perpetrated by Mamouljian and his press agent. Preminger's attorney ended by asking the SDG to impose disciplinary action against both Mamouljian and Birdwell.

Mamouljian's agent, Irving Lazar, was on vacation in Europe when the story of Mamouljian's firing broke in the press. Before leaving, he had urged Mamouljian to cease promoting himself in the press by publicizing his past associations with the Porgy story, or in antagonizing Goldwyn in other ways and agree to dismiss Birdwell from his employ. Mamouljian disregarded this advice and, when contacted by the SDG to respond to Mamouljian's allegations against Goldwyn, Lazar responded from Europe with a lengthy cable. In the cable from Paris, dated

August 10, 1958, Lazar reviewed the troubles between Mamoulian and Goldwyn over publicity, prefacing them by stating that:

IT HAD BEEN MY INTENTION NOT TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE MAMOULIAN GOLDWYN CONTROVERSY UNTIL I RETURNED TO CALIFORNIA BECAUSE IT WAS NOT UNTIL TODAY THAT I LEARNED OF ALL THE STATEMENTS MADE BY REUBEN [sic] MAMOULIAN AND ESPECIALLY SINCE I HAVE BEEN AN AGENT FOR TWENTY FIVE YEARS I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THE POLICY THAT AS AN AGENT IN A FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIP I SHOULD NEVER PARTICIPATE IN A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF A CLIENTS BEHAVIOR OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HOWEVER SINCE MAMOULIAN HAS STATED PUBLICLY FACTS WHICH ARE CONTRADICTORY TO THE ACTUAL EVENTS AND STATED THAT I WAS DERELICT IN MY OBLIGATIONS TO HIM I FEEL THAT I CANNOT WAIT UNTIL I RETURN.¹⁸

Lazar revealed that Mamoulian, contrary to his statements to the press, did know that he was about to be fired. Lazar urged him to make amends with Goldwyn, that the situation was salvageable. Furthermore, when both Mamoulian and Goldwyn mutually agreed that they could not work together, they all, together with Mamoulian's press agent, Birdwell, sat down and drafted the statement to the press announcing Mamoulian's departure from the film as resulting from irreconcilable artistic differences. It was the statement that Mamoulian himself had drafted for Goldwyn to release to the press which Goldwyn did release, and which after the fact Mamoulian condemned as calumny. The truth, according to Lazar, was that Goldwyn had fired Mamoulian, with Mamoulian fully aware of the fact, in advance, and in order to save Mamoulian from professional humiliation, publicized the press statement that Mamoulian and his own press agent had written. The

only startling piece of information to appear, unbeknownst to both Mamoulian and Lazar, was that Preminger would replace Mamoulian. Lazar still tried to reverse the course of events, but Mamoulian insisted that he had no desire to restore relations with Goldwyn and fulfill his contract.

As for Mamoulian's other claims against Goldwyn, it is true that Goldwyn initially had a great deal of trouble from both the NAACP and the Council for the Improvement of Negro Theatre Arts who denounced the project and urged black performers to boycott the film. An advertisement placed in the Hollywood Reporter by the latter organization read:

Dorothy and DuBose Heyward used the race situation in the South to write a lot of allegories in which Negroes were violent or gentle, humble or conniving, and given to erupting with all sorts of goings on after their day's work in the white folks' kitchen or the white folks' yard was over, like sniffing happy dust, careless love, crapshooting, drinking, topping it all off with knife play.

But it never occurred to them that the Negro was not any of this, and that he was just like anybody else and that this was a human being's way of reacting to the dehumanizing pressure of a master race.¹⁹

The meeting at Goldwyn's house with Poitier in which Mamoulian claims to have changed the actor's mind about doing the film reads differently in Arthur Marx's account:

He [Poitier] wanted to hear Goldwyn's concept of the movie from Goldwyn's own lips. . . . At the meeting, to which Rouben Mamoulian was also invited, Sam [Goldwyn] promised that Porgy would be a great movie, that Poitier would never have a greater opportunity, that he would emerge from it a super-

star and his black brothers would be beloved and respected for their courage and dignity in standing up against racial injustice and its consequent poverty.²⁰

Poitier is reportedly quoted as having said:

I am happy to say that my reservations were washed away by Mr. Goldwyn in his plan for Porgy and Bess. I am very happy that I met with Mr. Goldwyn. I found him almost as sensitive as I am.²¹

This contradicts Mamoulian's testimony that Poitier credited his decision to Mamoulian's words and vision.

In other recountings of the press conference, Poitier does mention Mamoulian's name as well as Goldwyn's. However, A. Scott Berg, in his Goldwyn biography, indicates that Poitier's decision to accept the role of Porgy, resulting in the "domino" agreements of Dorothy Dandridge, Pearl Bailey, and others, was not based on any rhetorical skill by either Goldwyn or Mamoulian. Instead, his change of heart resulted from a series of circumstances beyond his control. Poitier's west coast agent had apparently agreed, on his behalf, that he would star in the film but without first getting Poitier's consent. Goldwyn, unaware of this, announced to the press that Poitier was his Porgy. On hearing the news, Poitier informed both his agent and Goldwyn that he had no intention of accepting the role. Poitier had already agreed to act in Stanley Kramer's upcoming film, The Defiant Ones, a project Poitier very much wanted to do. Kramer, however, aware of the bind Poitier was in with Goldwyn, led Poitier to realize that if Poitier

embarrassed Goldwyn by declining Porgy, Goldwyn might institute some sort of blacklist against them both:

He [Poitier] and his agent closed their contingency deal with Kramer, then went to Goldwyn. "I know that I'm caught in a bind," he told Goldwyn, "--I want to do Kramer's picture. I know you know about the Kramer deal. I understand that you're not going to let me off the hook from the promise my agent gave you. If that is correct, then I'll do Porgy and Bess."22

The issue of screen credit was taken up by the SDG in late January and early February 1959, with the impending release of the completed Preminger version of the film. At this time, Mamoulian repeated his demand for shared billing as director of the film, with his name appearing first because of all the work he had done on the film. The SDG agreed that Mamoulian had made an unique and substantial contribution to the film, all to the satisfaction of Goldwyn. The SDG found Mamoulian's dismissal from the film to be professionally unsupportable and notified all SDG members that they were forbidden to enter into contract with Goldwyn.

Preminger then appeared at a hearing at the SDG office on February 2, 1959, where he was questioned by Frank Capra, in order to make a determination as to whether or not Mamoulian had a right to screen credit. Preminger responded to each of Mamoulian's claims about work done but pointed out that whatever Mamoulian had done in pre-production was not used by him, that he had never seen Mamoulian's stage direction of Porgy and Bess, and that even pre-recording done by Mamoulian was largely

unusable. Script, choreography, camera angles, staging, costumes, and sets were all changed. The only thing that remained was the cast. But casting, Preminger pointed out, is something the producer often does, without receiving any directorial credit, and that if credit were to be given it should be given as casting director. When Capra asked Preminger after lengthy testimony, how much of Mamoulian's work was in the final film, Preminger answered, "None, absolutely none. As a director."²³ Preminger mentioned that Previn denied having worked with Mamoulian on pre-recording of the music. Finally, neither Preminger nor Capra could understand why Mamoulian would want his name on a film that did not reflect his work. Mamoulian, in making these demands, had not even seen the film to check if, as he claimed, it was three-quarters his. He said he had no need to see it, nor any interest. The cinematographer, assistant director, and other technical crew supplied affidavits confirming that they had never had any contact with Mamoulian and that Preminger was the only person deserving screen credit for directing Porgy and Bess, and that no one else could claim even partial credit.

In the end, the SDG ruled against Mamoulian, agreeing with Preminger. The SDG's blacklisting of Goldwyn was an opportunity they were happy to seize upon after years of grievances by directors documenting Goldwyn's repeated failure to credit them in publicizing

films, and often not even meeting contractual salary agreements.

Porgy and Bess was Goldwyn's eightieth and final film. In the previous year, Goldwyn had seen several of his peers die--Louis B. Mayer, Harry Cohn, Jesse Lasky, and Cecil B. DeMille.

Mamoulian's reputation in Hollywood was severely damaged by this highly publicized episode. Worse for him, his self-confidence had been shattered by the ordeal. He had tried to destroy the powerful older male adversary, and lost. He had bragged about his contribution to a project one too many times. He had gotten into legal trouble with Langner, Helburn, and Rodgers and Hammerstein over the same issue--bragging in the press and claiming credit for more than he had done. With Goldwyn, he had met an opponent whose need for self-aggrandizement was at least as great as his own. Both men had made reputations as independents, bucking the studio system. What, after all these years, Mamoulian still did not understand, but which Lazar had tried to make him understand, was that the person who pays for a project, and makes artistic choices by assembling the talent, has the right to call it his. Goldwyn fired Mamoulian because Goldwyn had dreamed for twenty years of making a film of Porgy and Bess and worked hard for those twenty years to get the rights to do it. An eighty-year old man from humble beginnings who had struggled to build a legendary

career, however unscrupulously, he wanted his crowning achievement to be the immortalization of George Gershwin's masterpiece as Samuel Goldwyn's Porgy and Bess. He spared no expense on the film, knowing full well that he might lose money on his investment. Before the film went into production, Goldwyn had pledged to donate profits from the film to charity.

To Mamoulian, the history of his own artistic contribution to the shaping of Porgy and Bess entitled him to artistic ownership of the project, and he promoted it as such. When asked to desist, he refused. Goldwyn, found this intolerable. He asserted his power showing Mamoulian whose film it was. Mamoulian struggled vainly to maintain the film as his even after it had ceased to be his in any way.

Such behavior displays not only the continuation of a lifelong struggle with authority figures whom he perceived to have appropriated what was properly his, and the repeated artistic manifestations of this conflict, but also displayed the ever-increasing withdrawal from reality. This manifested itself in his work as a kind of aesthetic detachment, rendering his work little more than tastefully decorative as time progressed.

Mamoulian would suffer one more aborted effort on an even larger project than Porgy and Bess. His failure with this final film ended his directing career. In November 1959, Mamoulian began work on the film Cleopatra. The

wide-screen format was in vogue. Mamoulian had used it in Silk Stockings and was to have used it in Porgy and Bess as well, filmed in Technicolor and Todd-AO, a technically superior process to 70mm Cinemascope. The format was especially suited to epic spectacle. The expanding screen was a response to the threat of television. Ten Commandments had been a great success in 1956, as was Ben Hur in 1959. Walter Wanger persuaded Twentieth-Century-Fox President Spyros Skouras that a wide-screen epic based on the life of Cleopatra would be equally successful. Skouras agreed to the project and Wanger went to work engaging writers, actors, designers, and a director. It is not clear whether Mamoulian was Wanger's first choice to direct Cleopatra. Both men had played critical roles in one another's careers. Wanger appreciated Mamoulian's taste and judgment. The debacle over this film would make Cleopatra the last film either man would make, with Mamoulian beginning and ending his film career working for Wanger.

Mamoulian, hired before many of the other personnel, offered Wanger suggestions for casting and the hiring of technical personnel. Mamoulian insisted that of all screen actresses, only Elizabeth Taylor could successfully portray the title role. At first Wanger and Skouras discouraged Mamoulian from selecting Taylor because of all the bad publicity surrounding her romance and subsequent marriage to Eddie Fisher. After she

"stole" the husband of America's sweetheart, Debbie Reynolds, the public reviled Taylor, and producers considered her a risky investment at the moment. Mamoulian persisted. But Taylor was not interested in the part and made Wanger and Skouras an offer she thought they could only refuse. They did not and she made film history becoming the first actor to ever be paid over one million dollars in salary.

Wanger tried unsuccessfully to get playwright Christopher Fry to write the screenplay. Wanger's troubles over the screenplay to Cleopatra were at the heart of a nexus of contributory factors to the much publicized financial and artistic debacle that ensued. While Mamoulian was still director of the film, the script was handed from writer to writer with steady decline in usable material. Once Joseph L. Mankiewicz replaced Mamoulian as director, the resumption of filming before a new shooting script had been written led to tremendous waste in the name of expediency. Without a completed script or mapping-out of a predetermined route, the journey to completion took a meandering and inefficient road. Mankiewicz pleaded with the producers to shut down production for several months so a script could be written. But management rejected the idea since it would mean paying exorbitant salaries to keep the company on contract without using them. In the end, the money spent on extra shooting for a script that would

have to be edited on film rather than on the page far exceeded any money that would have been lost paying salaries during a waiting period. Lack of advance planning characterized every aspect of the production.

Mankiewicz said of Walter Wanger:

Walter was a very tasteful, wasteful gentleman. He knew very little about the economy of producing Not since Marco Polo came back from China had there been the advent of such riches in Italy. One of the Italian production managers became a millionaire from Cleopatra. Lots of money was stolen, but [Wanger] just "didn't know" about them and didn't stop them.²⁴

Mamoulian worked on Cleopatra for nearly two years and witnessed this sort of wasteful management from the start, while adding to it in his own characteristic fashion. Mamoulian worked separately with two writers on the screenplay to Cleopatra. English novelists Nigel Balchin and Lawrence Durrell were both writing drafts under Mamoulian's supervision. Mamoulian was to consult with Wanger via telegram on the progress of the drafts and in assembling the scenes from the two versions into a single script.

When Wanger began work on Cleopatra in 1958, he hired Art Director John DeCuir to reproduce ancient Alexandria on Twentieth Century-Fox's back lot. At this time, Fox sold this land to the developers who eventually built Century City, a large office building complex, on the valuable Beverly Hills property.

The new plan was to film Cleopatra on location in Egypt and Italy. Mamoulian was brought into the project

at this juncture, pleased with the prospect of location shooting; something he had wanted for Porgy and Bess. Mamoulian spent months in Italy scouting locations and recruiting personnel. Unbeknownst to Mamoulian, however, the studio executives had changed their minds. They instructed Skouras to shut down set construction in Italy and transfer the production to London's Pinewood Studios where the company could make use of the British government's tax incentives for foreign filmmakers under the Eady Plan, while also making use of Fox's frozen assets in Great Britain. By contrast, Italian taxes were high, and facilities and labor insufficient and underskilled to meet the quality standards of American sound and photographic technology. Communication was difficult and the laissez-faire working methods of the Italian film industry frustrating. Technical staff and equipment would have had to have been brought to Italy to bring production standards up to acceptable levels.

In order to stifle any opposition from Mamoulian, the decision to shift the production was made without consulting him. The director's only purpose in flying to London was to remedy the unsatisfactory screenplay by English novelist Nigel Balchin. To Mamoulian's surprise, he was met at the airport by John DeCuir, whom [sic]he thought was busily engaged in supervising and designing the sets in Rome. In the course of their drive into town, Mamoulian caught a distant glimpse of palm trees ludicrously dotting the suburban London landscape. According to DeCuir, Mamoulian turned as green as the lush English grass, asked the driver to stop the car, and proceeded to vomit over the railing of the parkway for the next fifteen minutes, incredulous and furious at the Fox management's double-cross.²⁵

Nevertheless, Mamoulian continued with the project, continuing to work with writers, designers, and technical staff. Wanger grew more dissatisfied with the script development. Durrell, author of the famous Alexandria Quartet, was not a writer to Mamoulian's liking.

Mamoulian characterized Durrell's work as

absolute crap. . . nothing but sensationalism, and steadfastly refusing to be associated with a man who thought and wrote that way.²⁶

With each new part of the script reaching Wanger, the work seemed to become less dramatic. Wanger cabled to Mamoulian frequently, wondering what was going on. One such cable read:

Dear Rouben:

WHEN THE PUBLIC BUYS TICKETS TO SEE CLEOPATRA THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT TO SEE A GREAT LOVE STORY CONTAINING MANY PASSIONATE SCENES BETWEEN THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE IN HISTORY--CLEOPATRA, CAESAR and ANTONY. THIS IS NOT IN THE SHOOTING SCRIPT AND IT IS ESSENTIAL. . . . for every good speech there has been injected more silly speeches than we have ever had in the script before. . . . The whole canvas of this great world with four dynamic personalities fighting for its domination, has been reduced to a bucolic, domestic, provincial picture of the nature of "Our Town," rather than the most dramatic, treacherous and unusual mores of history To be precise, all of the scenes in the Palace are completely without any sense of siege nor feeling that there is doubt as to what is going to happen to our leading protagonists. It seems more like a nice weekend in Surrey where the water is going to be turned off. . . . The always present spying, treacherous killing, dramatic Sword of Damocles over the existence of all the characters, the fantastic marriages for power, the deals, the accepted intrigue and suspicion which were indicated in the January 11th script, have been vacuumed out of this with weekend charades and silly sayings.²⁷

By January 1961, after incessant delays caused by Mamoulian, the writers, and Taylor's life-threatening illness, the production seemed further and further from getting underway. Although actual shooting had begun on September 28, 1960, it was suspended on November 18. Wanger sent veteran screenwriter Nunnally Johnson to London to salvage the script. After several threatened resignations, Mamoulian offered his resignation one last time on January 19, 1961, when Skouras accepted it. Mamoulian stated that Cleopatra was no longer the film he had been hired to direct and that the changes foisted upon him made it impossible to continue. Unbeknownst to Mamoulian, Taylor had been urging Skouras to fire Mamoulian and replace him with Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who had just directed her in the film version of Tennessee Williams' Suddenly Last Summer. Months later, when Mankiewicz was threatened with being fired, Taylor said of him,

Mr. Mankiewicz took Cleopatra over when it was nothing--when it was rubbish--and he made something out of it.²⁸

Shortly after Mamoulian's resignation, Nunnally Johnson, in a letter to Groucho Marx dated February 7, 1961, wrote:

Dear Grouch:

You would have heard from me before now if I hadn't been making monkeys out of Shakespeare and Shaw by writing dialogue for Twentieth-Century Fox's Cleopatra, which Rouben Mamoulian has been signed to direct. . . . Did you ever have anything to do with Mr. Mamoulian? Well, sir, he is quite a

character. After a couple of meetings with him I managed the first successful prediction I have made in my whole life. I bet Walter Wanger that he would never go to bat. All he wants to do is "prepare." A hell of a preparer. Tests, wardrobe, hair, toenails. You give Rouben something to prepare and he's dynamite. I bet Wanger two pounds (32 ounces) that he would never step into the batter's box. If you make him start this picture, I said, he will never forgive you to his dying day. This chap is a natural born martyr. If you don't martyrize him he is going to be sore as hell. The rest is history. . . . It turned out that he wouldn't even read what I was writing, which created something of a bottleneck. The writer he wanted, next to himself, was Paddy Chayevsky. (It's all right, I don't expect you to believe one word of this, though it's God's truth.) It seems that Elizabeth Taylor told him that Chayevsky was just the man to pick up where Shakespeare, Shaw and I had left off and old Rouben didn't want any better recommendation than that.²⁹

In another account about Mamoulian from Johnson, Leonard Mosley writes:

Johnson was appalled [at the footage that Mamoulian had shot]. Mamoulian's work seemed to consist of shot after shot of the drably lit set at Pinewood. He said to Wanger: "I don't think this feller is ever going to shoot this picture. He's testing fabrics. A man's really desperate when he begins testing fabrics. He's afraid to come to bat."³⁰

In all, Mamoulian had shot only ten-and-a-half minutes of film. These included:

. . . a conventional scene of Cleopatra's introduction to Caesar (Peter Finch) [later replaced by Rex Harrison], by being unrolled from a carpet, and a weird symbolic chase scene between Antony (Stephen Boyd) [later replaced by Richard Burton] on a stallion and Cleopatra on a mare.³¹

Joseph Mankiewicz also found thousands of feet of wardrobe tests shot by Mamoulian, all inexplicably with sound. Mankiewicz termed the script he had inherited from Mamoulian as:

. . . a pretentious fairytale about a "virgin who

could only be deflowered by a god," filled with "ornate cat symbolism."³²

Once again, Mamoulian's interest was in painterly imagery to hang on a plot about a love triangle inhabited by archetypal characters; a transposition of the Carmen story and characters.

Mamoulian also delayed filming for nearly two years while he collected salary. As Johnson suggested, his confidence was probably so shattered by this point that he could not face his task. Wanger wrote a list of notes on Mamoulian shortly after Mamoulian's final resignation which, although cryptic, reveal factors leading to Mamoulian's departure from the film:

1. The horse must know the master
2. London arrival--suspicion
3. Durrell material not given to me for 10 days--sent to him
4. Result of Rome trip
5. Production meeting--casting
6. Directors prerogative
7. Meetings with special instructions to Messel and to DeCuir
8. Johnnie Johnson regarding his requests for information (will inform you when I feel like it and when I am ready)
9. Trading off scenes--secrets about production
10. Brandeis orders not to give me script until he has approved it.
11. Blue pages first I saw
12. Porgy and Bess
13. General disorder never returning letters, using material forgetting things
14. Denying that he ever changed his mind in front of the entire production staff after he had said one thing and then reverted to another
15. Difficulty in getting him to go see plays or actors to read
16. Impossible to get him to work under pressure at nights and weekend
17. Concern in what was going on politically and with the Home Office far more than the production.

18. Not wanting to discuss production at mealtimes
19. Idiosyncrasies of the great master and repetition of anecdotes concerning his past.....
20. Rudeness to all and infuriated if anything didn't suit him such as an office, his phones not answering, his mail being not properly presented to him
21. Never a definite decision but always protecting himself for a change and blame on others, even with people he is close to, like DeCuir.
22. Blow-up with me and DeCuir about DeCuir's painting of the big set
23. Changes in Sets without telling me
24. Approving plans without telling me and pretending to present everything to me.
25. Alibis in connection with what he did shoot
26. Problems over casting
27. The costumes
28. The continuous meddling with the script and weakening it
29. Trying to invent new sequences and ending up with television shorts
30. Preaching to everybody at production meetings quoting the value of Becky Sharp and other pictures of the past.
31. Lack of promptness or following through.³³

Soon after his return to California, Mamoulian spoke to the press, proposing that the United States Congress form a commission to study the possibilities of offering inducements through government subsidies, for American and foreign film co-productions. He won support for this idea from Senators Thomas Kuchel of California and Senator Jacob Javits of New York.³⁴

In 1964, Mamoulian published a children's book that he had written as a Christmas present for his wife Azadia. It was entitled Abigayil: The Story of the Cat at the Manger and tells the nativity story from the perspective of a cat. Instead of being merely a motif, as cats are in Mamoulian's films, here the protagonist is a cat; a protagonist like most other Mamoulian

protagonists--the victim of oppression by sadistic authority figures. This cat is a keen observer, unusually smart and innovative at circumventing external constraints. Moreover, the story is a retelling of the lesson Mamoulian learned from Grandma Kate: never let fear of a powerful and cruel adversary cause you to retreat; face that adversary boldly with love and you will triumph.

For ten years, Mamoulian worked intermittently on an updated version of Shakespeare's Hamlet, eliminating arcane language no longer in use. Since boyhood, Mamoulian had been an admirer of Shakespeare's genius and his work. Hamlet, the masterpiece of the master, was the play Mamoulian most admired. It is no surprise that the themes, characters, and relationships in the play appealed to Mamoulian, especially at the end of his career when the decision of whether or not amidst a sea of troubles to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune was an existential issue for him. Yet he was appalled at any suggestion of a psychoanalytic interpretation of the play. In an unpublished article (probably written in the early 1960s) entitled, "Shakespeare's Hostile Critics," Mamoulian remarks:

An ancient saying says:

"There is enough stupidity in every wise man." FREUD himself is no exception. His theories about MICHELANGELO, his book on LEONARDO DA VINCI and one on MOSES amply confirm the maxim. It was DR. FREUD who first proclaimed to the world that HAMLET'S mystery was his Oedipus complex. He claimed this to be a discovery, while actually it was but his own

fictional invention.³⁵

Mamouliau continues with a tirade against Ernst Jones' Hamlet and Oedipus which he said "must have been written in a padded cell," and that "what he [Jones] does to Shakespeare and HAMLET is equivalent to dumping garbage into the lap of LA PIETA"³⁶ He goes on to explain how art should not be evaluated in terms other than artistic. He sums up after many pages of complaint by saying:

Stripped of its pseudo-scientific jargon, DR. JONES' evaluation of HAMLET could be put into a nutshell: HAMLET is a play about a son who wants to go to bed with his mother, a father who wants to go to bed with his daughter, a brother who wants to go to bed with his sister, all of whom are as unconscious of their emotions, thoughts and purposes, as SHAKESPEARE himself was when he wrote HAMLET.³⁷

The length and passion of Mamouliau's diatribe against the psycholanalytic interpretation of Hamlet attests to the power it had for him.

Shakespearean scholar and reviser A.L. Rowse lauded Mamouliau's revised Hamlet and what it attempted to do. Other critics cited numerous instances of misinterpretation or mistranslation of the Elizabethan language into contemporary English. Purists opposed the idea of tampering with the original in any way. In all, Mamouliau replaced approximately 2000 words, rewrote approximately 100 lines, eliminated 510, changed spellings, punctuation, act divisions, rearranged some syntax, turned some asides into dialogue, and wrote stage directions into the text. No small transformation; this

is the kind of work Mamoulian had career-long experience doing in the theatre and in film.

Mamoulian's revised Hamlet received a premiere production by the University of Kentucky's Transylvania College in 1966. Mamoulian attended the opening but did not direct. Mamoulian's version was never produced elsewhere. The only legacy of this work might be seen in the similarly inspired adaptations of Shakespeare's plays that Rowse himself published years later.

An announcement in Variety, October 4, 1966, mentions Mamoulian's planning a collaboration with Robert Hardy Andrews on a musicalization of his novel, Great Day in the Morning, to be called "Shining Mountains," with music and lyrics by Summer Holiday lyricist Ralph Blaine. The production was projected for fall 1967.³⁸ One month later, The New York Times makes mention of Mamoulian collaborating on a film biography of Giacomo Puccini, from a treatment by Mary Anita Loos for Twentieth Century-Fox.³⁹ Another project mentioned is a musical remake of the 1939 John Barrymore film, The Great Man Votes. This was announced as an independent production. None of these projects ever materialized.

In December 1966, Zachary Mamoulian, father of Rouben Mamoulian, died in Hollywood at age 100. Mamoulian's mother died in 1972 at age 96. Mamoulian spent the nineteen-seventies and eighties busily travelling from one film festival to another; speaking as

guest lecturer at universities and museums and at retrospectives of his films. These included the San Sebastian Film Festival in 1973, the Australian Film Festival in 1974, and the Teheran Film Festival in the same year. He was invited to the Soviet Union and visited his native Tiflis, now Tblisi, for the first time since his emigration. In 1980 he was inducted into the Broadway Hall of Fame. At a special ceremony in 1983, Mamoulian received the Directors Guild of America's highest award, the D.W. Griffith Award for Lifetime Achievement.

CONCLUSION

Mamoulian's private papers during the last two decades of his life reveal a man observing what he perceived to be a radical decline in moral standards. He repeatedly questioned the outcome of the new freedoms brought about in society in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. In his eyes, abuse of this freedom was destroying everything of value civilization had attained. In its place he saw licentiousness and brutality. Freedom had led to moral and social disintegration.

He despaired at the future of democracy. Rather than seizing the freedom democracy afforded to aspire to his highest potential, man had squandered this freedom on indulgence of his basest instincts. Society had made a virtue of mediocrity. He wrote, "There is so much noise in our world that no one hears a delicate thought, or recognizes a gentle emotion."¹

In a 1977 panel discussion at the University of Southern California entitled, "Sex in Cinema," Mamoulian decried the depiction of explicit sex acts and nudity in contemporary films. He found them not only vulgar but also boring, leaving nothing to the imagination.² When asked to reflect on his experiences working under

censorship, Mamoulian remarked that censorship, undesirable as it was, had inadvertently challenged filmmakers to avoid the obvious and use their imagination in order to circumvent these restrictions. He decried what he saw as a general lack of imagination and artistry in contemporary films. He found the abandonment of stylization through montage in favor of realism to be a betrayal of film as an artistic medium. Realism, he felt, was capable of showing only what was already obvious. What, he asked, was the need for art to show horrors and degradation when we can see it every day all around us, forced upon our awareness in the daily papers and on television? Film, as art, should focus on what is not obvious. The negative in the world was obvious. What we failed to notice was the positive, the beauty in the world and in ourselves. His argument assumes that what is stylized is not obvious and what is realistic is, whereas the converse could equally be true. He does not consider that realism, too, is a style, but rather equates it with the absence of artistry.

During the course of Mamoulian's career, both the musical theatre and film grew, expanded, and developed formally. Its subject matter was often naive and anachronistic, but its form was not bankrupt. As both forms became depleted, artists turned to the content, as a means of further development, creating greater relevance and urgency. Mamoulian, on the musical stage,

and especially in film, tried to reinvigorate what had become institutionalized and ossified in a short period of time by applying formal elements appropriated from other artistic media: classic painting, music, and opera. This was his technique for resuscitation. Mamoulian saw the emergence of realism in film as a sign of society's decadence. "Film reflects the fabric of the nation. When the nation gets sick, it is reflected in the films."³

Mamoulian's preference for what he called "stylization" over what he called "naturalism" goes beyond a superficial aesthetic. It points to an issue of control which characterized both his working methods and the thematic content of his work. Lack of control over form and content, in art and in life, threatened the abyss. He provided us with a look at this abyss in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, whose protagonist allows his control to slip away. Mamoulian saw the abyss in the changes taking place in society in the nineteen sixties. The art of the nineteen sixties and afterwards was, for Mamoulian, merely a reflection of this relinquishing of individual and social control. Art had abandoned stylization, that which makes art art, and which gives life its beauty and value.

Mamoulian's decision to become a director reveals an interest and a need to control the mise-en-scène of life through art. Mamoulian wrote:

The world is like a hit play--the longer it runs,
the more it deteriorates. Too many individual wills,

wrong choices, selfishness, stupidity. As a long-run play, the world needs the Director's intervention, without which it is doomed to failure.⁴

The "Director" Mamoulian refers to in this instance is God; the parallel speaks for itself. He clearly felt a need to control, to be controlling. Directing afforded him this opportunity and he exploited theatre and film to this end.

When Mamoulian abandoned Europe for America, he retained an old world social order of master and servant as his modus operandus in dealing with the world. He directed his actors with a baton and a whistle like an orchestra conductor or an animal trainer. He understood the actors' need to be liked and receive approval. He also understood that this need was usually greater than their need to maintain their own autonomy and he engaged them in a ritual of recalcitrance and seduction. When his artistic vision was inspired, their submission yielded brilliant results. When his vision was less than inspired, their performances were sterile. This same power struggle, this need to control, was the subject matter of his work as well as his method of working. In his work we see challenge to authority with its consequent subjugation of race, class, and gender to the dominant white male culture. Control of aggression and libido are central themes underlying his work.

The fact that Mamoulian's films passed the censors to the extent that they did may not only have been a

credit to his skills at flattery, but point to shared purposes in the depiction of sexuality and aggression. The Production Code, served in the Foucaultian sense, not to censor sex, but to focus on its dangers and channel its expression into legitimate, socially acceptable behavior. Film came to serve, if not replace, religion as a purveyor of societal values and norms in the secular world. Contrary to shutting its eyes and ears to sexuality and aggression, the film industry constructed an elaborate apparatus for examining and labelling aberrant behavior. Mamoulian, in examining these urges--the animalistic impulses--never questioned the prescribed outcome for his protagonists, subscribing to status quo values wholeheartedly even in the face of resultant suffering and injustice.

Why did he abandon his suffering protagonists in their plight against the oppressive forces in society? One explanation for his retreat might be his desire, as a foreigner, to assimilate by embracing the values of the status quo, even while showing these values to be oppressive. In speaking of Felix Mendelssohn, Theodor Adorno wrote:

Mendelssohn was a banker's son, but as a Jew, at least, an outsider in his own stratum; the slickness of his compositions has some of the excessive zeal of one who is not quite accepted.⁵

The same could be said of Hollywood's pioneering moguls and of Mamoulian, the aristocratic son of a banker. An

Armenian and an artist, he was always outside the mainstream.

Mamoulian worked to de-contextualize the expression of conflict between specific marginal individuals and groups and the dominant culture by dislodging it from its base in the temporal world. He took works rooted in temporal social conflict, and removed them to a universal realm, keeping the external signs of time and place as mere decoration while appropriating their signification to empty universalism--all in the guise of liberal-humanism. He did this with Porgy, with Queen Christina, with Golden Boy, with Lost in the Stars, and with many other works. The choice to represent conflicts as universal affinities rather than displacements shows Mamoulian's desire not to deal with these conflicts on their own terms, but to focus them into some white light of love and purity and truth. This is where the mask comes in concealing the offensive presence by aestheticizing it. As a result, no discovery takes place, only the mediation of the threatening presence. And that which is mediated is co-opted, appropriated to nurture and confirm the status quo. Mamoulian ". . . turned the 'trauma' of the other into an 'epiphany' of the same."⁶ Any attempt by artists to confront the transgressive in reality was deemed nihilistic, regressive, pessimistic, atavistic. Mamoulian offered imaginary resolutions to real contradictions. Only through presentation of

marginal life as self-destructive, could the status quo be defined and reinforced; made to feel superior and secure, or threatened into conformity and submission. The winning of the positive over the negative implies a conquest. Failure is never examined or accepted. Mamoulian wanted heroic actors to play heroic characters behaving heroically even in a banal world.

Mamoulian's "art for life's sake" is a noble, if not grandiose, sentiment. But it denies the true function of art to go beyond the obvious; to stir, provoke, and question. Instead, he chose to promote unquestioned, unconsciously conditioned reflexive ideologies through film as a medium of mass communication, premasticated for easy consumption. Mamoulian held that the primary purpose of art was to entertain, and that good art, by definition, was entertaining. He aspired to raise the popular art of film and musical comedy to a high art without demanding the attention and conscious collaboration of decoding demanded by high art. As a result, Mamoulian's work was often referred to as arty and mannered--self-consciously aspiring to art.

Mamoulian's unwillingness to confront reality took a tragic toll in his own life. Mamoulian wrote, "To make your life a true work of art is the highest achievement man can aspire to."⁷ His own life was no less filled with the same kind of denial as his work. His existence on Schyuler Road, high up in Beverly Hills, afforded him an

Eden within which to retreat unbothered by the pain and brutality of the outside world. Like Norma Desmond in Sunset Boulevard, Mamoulian tried to spend his life in a world he created for himself, insulated from contact with the world outside filmmaking or theatre. Unable to cope with the exigencies of daily existence and aging, he simply denied their presence. The extremity of his denial must ultimately be registered as his cause of death.

Rouben Mamoulian died in Hollywood on December 5, 1987, at age ninety, of complications from prolonged malnutrition and dehydration. In spite of his advanced age and ill health, he died intestate--denying his own mortality.

Mamoulian had spent a lifetime, from his privileged early years to his privileged later years, never having to attend to life's daily necessities. From household servants to studio assistants, he always had others to attend to such chores for him. He never had to bother how food got on the table and bills got paid. He had managed to escape the drudgery of ordinary life to live the heroic existence of one of his dramatic protagonists.

Toward the end of his life, circumstances no longer permitted him to delegate all but the pursuit of beauty to others to attend to on his behalf. After more than two decades of alcoholism, Mamoulian's wife Azadia, exhibited violent, erratic behavior. Eventually no servants could tolerate her abuse, and these two aristocrats ignored the

filth in which they lived which had accumulated through neglect. Their romantic admiration for cats blinded them to the reality of their unchecked reproduction. When Mamoulian died, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's office reported over forty cats living in the house, their valuable furniture and momentos destroyed by years of cat urination, defecation, and clawing. Everything in the house, including the Mamoulians themselves, was flea-infested.

When Mamoulian's wife, Azadia, was hospitalized in the mid-1980's and certified mentally incompetent, Mamoulian agreed to surrender himself and his wife as wards of the County of Los Angeles as precondition for her release. One final time, Mamoulian was forced to submit his autonomy to a custodial institution. Friends lamented his unwillingness to face his wife's illness of many years and act accordingly. They were also shocked by the denial and neglect which allowed him to deteriorate into the hopeless condition into which he had descended.

To the end, his life and art were inseparable. In August 1968, he wrote, "If 'all the world's a stage' then the important thing in life is to give a good performance, regardless of the quality of the play you are in."⁸ Appearance was all. His need to control his life and the world, through art, rendered him inflexible when that life and that world became inconsistent with his aesthetic vision. For some moments in time, however, he

was able in his art and in his life, to sculpt out of life's experience a vision of beauty and grace. At these moments, he displayed true genius and created true art.

Appendix A: A CHRONOLOGY OF PLAYS AND FILMS DIRECTED
BY ROUBEN MAMOULIAN

- 1922 The Beating at the Door by Austin Page
- 1923 Rigoletto (Act 3) by Giuseppe Verdi
Faust (prison scene) by Charles Gounod
- 1924 The Barber of Seville (Act 2) by G. Rossini
Volga Boatman's Song (musical variety)
Tannhauser (Act 3) by Richard Wagner
Romeo and Juliet (Act 1) by Charles Gounod
The Queen of Spades (scenes) by P. Tchaikovsky
Shanewis by Charles Wakefield Cadman
H. M. S. Pinafore (Act 1) by Arthur Sullivan
Boris Godunov (scenes) by Modest Moussorgsky
H. M. S. Pinafore (Act 2)
The Queen of Hearts (musical variety)
- 1925 Faust by Gounod
South of 36 (musical variety)
Faust (Act 3)
La Traviata (Act 4) by Giuseppe Verdi
Rigoletto (Act 4)
A Bit of Erin (musical variety)
Carmen by Georges Bizet
The Prince Goes Hunting (musical variety)
Aida (scenes) by Giuseppe Verdi
Eugene Onegin (scenes) by Peter Tchaikovsky
Manon (scenes) by Jules Massenet
Pelleas and Melisande (Act 4) by Claude Debussy
Romeo and Juliet (scenes)
Boris Godunov (scenes)
Cavalleria Rusticana (scenes) by Pietro Mascagni
The Pirates of Penzance by Arthur Sullivan
Prologue to the Iron Horse (musical variety)
A Pompeian Afternoon (musical variety)
The Boastful Braggart (musical variety)
The Spectre in Bed (musical variety)
A Serenade in Porcelain (musical variety)
- 1926 Gems from the Merry Widow (musical variety)
Sister Beatrice by Maurice Maeterlinck
Pictures in Melody (musical variety)
Carmen (scenes)

- A Night at the Inn (musical variety)
Maytime in Kew (musical variety)
The Game of Love (musical variety)
The Count of Luxembourg (scenes) by Franz Lehar
The Flute of Krishna (musical variety)
Then and Now (musical variety)
A Corner in Spain (musical variety)
A Dream in a Wax Museum (musical variety)
A Forest Episode (musical variety)
The Phonograph of Tomorrow (musical variety)
Enter Madame by Archibald and Byrne
Clarence by Booth Tarkington
He Who Gets Slapped by Leonid Andreyev
- 1927 Seven Keys to Baldpate by George M. Cohan
Porgy by Dorothy and DuBose Heyward
- 1928 Marco Millions by Eugene O'Neill
These Modern Women by Lawrence Langner
Cafe Tomaza by William Dubois
Women by Edith and Edward Ellis
Congai by Harry Harvey and Carlton Hindreth
Wings Over Europe by Nichols and Browne
- 1929 The Game of Love and Death by Romain Rolland
- 1930 Applause (Paramount)
R. U. R. by Karel Capek
A Month in the Country by Ivan Turgenev
Die Gluckliche Hand by Arnold Schoenberg
A Farewell to Arms by Lawrence Stallings
Solid South by Lawton Campbell
- 1931 City Streets (Paramount)
- 1932 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Paramount)
Love Me Tonight (Paramount)
- 1933 Song of Songs (Paramount)
Queen Christina (M. G. M.)
- 1934 We Live Again (Samuel Goldwyn)
- 1935 Becky Sharp (Pioneer)
Porgy and Bess by George Gershwin
- 1936 The Gay Desperado (Pickford-Lasky)
- 1937 High, Wide and Handsome (Paramount)
- 1938 Porgy and Bess (Los Angeles & San Francisco)
- 1939 Golden Boy (Columbia)

- 1940 The Mark of Zorro (Twentieth Century-Fox)
- 1941 Blood and Sand (Twentieth Century-Fox)
- 1942 Rings on Her Fingers (Twentieth Century-Fox)
- 1943 Oklahoma! by Rodgers and Hammerstein
- 1944 Sadie Thompson by Duke, Dietz, and Mamoulian
- 1945 Carousel by Rodgers and Hammerstein
- 1946 St. Louis Woman by Arlen and Mercer
- 1947 Oklahoma! (London)
- 1948 Summer Holiday (M. G. M.)
- 1949 Leaf and Bough by Joseph Hayes
 Lost in the Stars by Weill and Anderson
- 1950 Arms and the Girl by Gould, Fields, & Mamoulian
 Carousel (London)
- 1951 Oklahoma! (New York revival; Berlin tour)
- 1953 Adolph Zukor's Golden Jubilee (musical variety)
- 1954 Carousel (Los Angeles and San Francisco)
- 1955 Oklahoma! (State Department tour, Europe)
- 1957 Silk Stockings (M. G. M.)

(n. b.: dates listed indicate year of first public presentation.)

Appendix B

Letter dated June 5 1933 from Rouben Mamoulian to
A.M. Botsford at the Motion Picture Producers and
Distributors of America, Inc. in reference to Song Of
Songs, taken from MPPDA files housed at Margaret Herrick
Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences,
Beverly Hills, California.

I am making the last trims on The Song of Songs
and putting music to it. So in a day or two this new
print which, incidentally, is over 1000 feet shorter
than the one you have seen, will be ready for re-
view. You will notice that I have greatly condensed
the whole picture, made many cuts, and have trimmed
practically every shot, which greatly helps the dra-
matic flow and the pictorial development of the
film. I am very anxious to have you show this print
to Dr. Wingate. I haven't the least worry about any
censorship problem in connection with this picture
and am absolutely convinced from my past experiences
that the members of the censor boards will not only
approve of the film as it stands, but also, I hope,
will genuinely like it. Of course, I must confess,
I am not one of those who believes in all the bug-
aboos about censors who thinks that they are many-
headed dragons, destroying anything that is in any
way unconventional, regardless of the fact whether
it has any artistic and moral justification and
serves a wholesome purpose or not. I know it is not
so.

If a momentary deviation into personal memories
will not bore you, I would like to remember here my
very first experience with the New York Censor
Board. It was almost four years ago when I got my
first film Applause. I'll never forget how everyone
tried to frighten me by saying that it was impos-
sible to do anything real, honest, and true on the
screen. Not only because of the producers' leanings
toward the conventional recipes in public entertain-
ment, but also and mainly because of the ruthless

clutches of censorship on the screen. It all sounded pretty terrible, especially because my experience in the New York theatre had been so happy. I remember how, after finishing Applause, I waited to meet the censors board. They were going to see the picture. Imagine my surprise when, instead of seeing a bunch of dried up old mummies and hypocrites, I found myself in contact with the most delightfully cultured people of fine taste and discrimination. I will never forget the conversation that followed, and I must confess, that from that time on I have always taken the stand for the New York Censors Board against some of the opinions prevailing about the arbitrary way in which they cut pictures. I also sympathize with them in the difficult problems that they are frequently facing. Their reaction to Applause, their appreciation of the honesty of purpose which was the foundation of that film, earned my immediate gratitude for their understanding and sensitiveness. As you probably remember, the board passed Applause without a single cut. I remember the main thing I carried out of the conversation with the members of the board was that we all agreed that if every film that were made was rigidly and uncompromisingly based on honesty of purpose and good taste, which are the bases of all true art, there would never be any difficulty or misunderstanding in connection with intelligent censorship.

I don't want to appear to be striking a theatric pose and giving way to melodramatic decorations, but I would be avoiding the truth if I didn't tell you that I have always tried, to the best of my knowledge, to adhere to honesty and good taste in anything I have ever done either for the theatre or for the screen. (And I do hope that when I deviate from it somebody will be kind enough to shoot me.)

I have discovered that that is a policy not only necessary to my personal happiness and satisfaction, but that it also happens to be the best way to save one's work from mutilation. I cannot help being somewhat proud that every single film that I have made which includes besides Applause, City Streets, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Love Me Tonight, has been invariably passed by the New York Censors Board without any cuts whatsoever and with the censors' approbation. All this gives me great confidence in the judgment of the New York Censors.

The story of Song of Songs has no claim either to be particularly striking or unusual or new. It follows a rather conservative plot in its unfolding. But there is one main point that stands out. The story deals with a great love, in the truest sense of the word. This comes as a great relief after the

definite preponderance on the screen of themes reflecting the disillusionment and cynicism of our age. Song of Songs is the story of a woman who knows not infatuation but only love. Like the sacred lotus flower of ancient Egypt which blossoms only once in its lifetime, so Lily, the girl in The Song of Songs, opens her heart to love only once, and is faithful to it unto death. The key to the character of the girl is found in the beautiful lines of Solomon, "Put as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. For love is strong as death." This really is the thesis of the whole story.

The Song of Songs of a human heart is symbolized on the screen aurally through the beautiful poetry and through the musical theme taken out of the sixth symphony by the great Tchaikovsky, and visually through the statue of a young girl listening in awe-inspired awe to the distant melodies of a heavenly song of songs.

The leading man character of the story is a young sculptor, and it is he who creates the statue in question. Perforce, there are several scenes involving the modelling of the statue, and taking place in the sculptor's studio. A superficial and narrow-minded observer might, in connection with this, bring up the question of nudity on the screen. When I say that I am afraid I am stretching my imagination much too far because even narrow-minded people have emotions and these can always be reached through anything that is really beautiful and uplifting. And I believe that scenes dealing with the love story of The Song of Songs, and taking place in the background of the studio, with its sculpture, are of such a nature, as to invoke only the best, and not the worst in human nature. I have tried honestly and very hard to avoid anything that might look like sensationalism or exploitation of nudity as box office attraction, because even the slightest suspicion of that would make me permanently unhappy.

I have already sent you a full list of all statues used in the film and in it you will discover that every single statue without exception is an individual piece of art, created by sculptors of international reputation. They are the kind of statues that you see in art galleries, public museums, city halls, and public schools. Also, the actual statues used in the film have been exhibited in museums and galleries, and many of them have won high prizes. The main statue, "The Song of Songs," as you probably know from newspapers, is on its way to the Chicago World's Fair to be exhibited to millions of visitors who will be there from all parts of the world.

I have tried not to be either obvious or unduly

suggestive in any scene in the picture dealing with the love, in its different phases, between the sculptor and the girl. And I think that in every shot that includes statues, it is not nudity that stands out, but beauty, symbolized through the human form. It is not for nothing that through many centuries of development the human race, in its search for beauty and its desire to express it in a concrete visual form, has always chosen for its medium the form of the human body. In this, again, art meets religion for that which was created, "In His own image," is found by the artist in all the periods of history, pagan and Christian alike to be the most expressive medium expressing beauty to approach divinity. The first synonym for beauty that comes to anybody's mind is always Venus de Milo. And whether it is under the sky of pagan Rome or in the sacred halls of the Ciappella Sistina, beauty finds its expression through human form.

This letter is developing into something it wasn't intended to be. I have no intentions of writing an essay, but I have gone into all this because I feel so strongly about it. If I have bored you, I beg for your indulgence. I am very anxious to get the reactions to this film, so far as the censorship is concerned. I again wholeheartedly repeat that I see not the slightest cause for worry. The print Mr. Wingate is going to review is already scored. I hope you will like the music. I think it is the most beautiful score I have ever had in any of my pictures. The nobility of Wagner, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky gives a lift to every scene and, to my mind, brings out even more forcefully the honesty and nobility of emotions with which those scenes are dealing.

Rouben Mamoulian

Endnotes

Introduction.

¹George Stevens, Jr., George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey (Creative Film Center, Inc., Productions, 1985).

²These included plans for Broadway musical versions of Faust, Carmen, The Barber of Seville, and Huckleberry Finn. Refer to chapter 9 for further information.

³Rouben Mamoulian, Hamlet: A New Version (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965).

⁴_____, Abigayil: The Story of the Cat at the Manger (Greenwich, Ct.: New York Graphic Society Publishers, Ltd., 1964).

⁵To play opposite Greta Garbo in Queen Christina. John Gilbert was cast in the part.

⁶Rouben Mamoulian, private notes, August 1-8, 1973.

⁷In his private notes, February 19, 1970, Mamoulian has a page entitled, The Cat, which reads:

An absolute individual.--dignity--pride--courage--coolness, gentle with friends, fierce with enemies--beauty--grace--cleanliness--speed and a sharpshooters aim--soft as velvet, sharp as needles.

God created man on the sixth day, when he was tired. He did better with animals and wonderously well with cats, all cats, but especially the "domestic" cat. The only untrainable animal, the only one who combines the jungle with civilization.

Superb manners in eating--self willed--but loving. A cat purring is the most soothing and lovely music. It says all is well in the world.

It is virtually impossible to draw or paint a cat--the softness of the fur, the fluidity of the body and the latent movement combined with the precision of form.

Their trust is the greatest compliment. They are most like humans, but integrated, whole seamless.

⁸Arthur C. Danto, The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

⁹Rouben Mamoulian, personal notes, August 1972, in preparation for "Voice of America" radio interview by Arthur Knight.

¹⁰Tom Milne, Mamoulian (London: Indiana University Press, Cinema One Series, 1964).

¹¹William Joseph Becvar, "The Stage and Film Career of Rouben Mamoulian" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, Drama Department, 1975).

¹²Bennett T. Oberstein, "The Broadway Directing Career of Rouben Mamoulian" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Theatre Department, 1977).

Chapter 1. EARLY INFLUENCES

¹Not 1898 as some sources report. The 1897 birthdate was verified by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office at the time of Mamoulian's death, December 4, 1987.

²Andrew Sarris, ed., Hollywood Voices: Interviews With Film Directors (New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), 60.

³Rouben Mamoulian, "Notes from the Desk Pad" n.d.

⁴Rouben Mamoulian, interview, 1958, Columbia University Oral History, New York. Mamoulian claimed to have attended the same class as French film director Rene Clair at the Lycee Montaigne but the two boys did not know one another.

This oral history was sealed until after Mamoulian's death, at his request, yet contains no previously undisclosed information.

⁵_____, interview with Paul Kozak in preparation for USC tribute, October 24, 1975, Beverly Hills.

⁶The reader should not get an incorrect impression about the study of criminal law in Russia at the turn-of-the-century. Unlike in this country where law is a graduate course of study providing professional training for performing highly skilled functions in a complex legal system, Mamoulia's law degree was more closely equivalent to a present-day general liberal arts degree at a four-year college--standard education for someone of the genteel class.

⁷An interesting illustration of this can be seen in Mamoulia's handwritten "Night Prayer," February 12, 1962:

Dear God, thank you for your unnumerable blessings. For life--which is so good. For the beauty of this earth you created. For all green things that grow on it, that flower and bear fruit. Thank you for the mystifying and awesome universe all around us. Thank you for all the animals that are on the face of this earth, those innocent creatures so lovely to look at, so perfectly integrated, obedient to your laws and so capable of affection. Bless them, dear Heavenly Father, and with them the innocents of the human race also, and protect them from the cruelty of man. And I thank you for those of human family to whom you have given a spark of your divinity, which enables them to contribute to the goodness and beauty of your world. Thank you for Jesus Christ, your favorite son, for Socrates, for Shakespeare without whom life would be poorer, for Bach and Beethoven, for Michel Angelo and Da Vinci, for Alexander Dumas and Walter Scott and many others who ennoble and enrich our lives.

⁸Rouben Mamoulia, speaking at Delta Kappa Alpha salute, moderated by Paul Kozak, December 7, 1975, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

⁹Hundreds are listed and range from artists of every type to politicians and royalty to famous scientists and religious leaders; a veritable Who's Who of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹⁰These included Paul Horgan, Edwin Justice Meyer, Olga Signorelli, Anita Loos, Daniel Taradash, Lewis Meltzer, John Cecil Holmes, Meredith Willson, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, Dale Wasserman, and Arthur Knight.

¹¹These included Feodor Chaliapin, Maurice Maeterlinck, Somerset Maugham, Clifford Odets, Rod Steiger, Ethel Merman, Laurence Olivier, and George Baxter. (for more about Baxter, see Chapter 4 discussion of Congai).

¹²Rouben Mamoulian, "Random Notes From the Desk Pad" December 21, 1962:

"GREATEST ONE MAN ACHIEVEMENT: Art--MICHAEL ANGELO [sic]; Literature--SHAKESPEARE; All-Around Man--DA VINCI; Spirit--JESUS CHRIST; Living Life--SOCRATES & ST. FRANCIS; Most Heavenly in Music--J. S. BACH; Most Dramatic in Music--L. V. BETHOVEN [sic]; Politics--M. GANDHI; Statesmanship--A. LINCOLN; Revolution--SIMON BOLIVAR."

This list is curious, given his opposition to the idea of rankings and awards for artists, not to mention the silliness of it. He stated on numerous occasions that in art there is no competition. And although he was active in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and was a presenter at several "Oscar" awards ceremonies, he was opposed to the concept.

¹³_____, interview following May 2, 1984 screening of Love Me Tonight, American Film Institute, Los Angeles.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶S. N. Behrman, People in a Diary (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 248.

¹⁷Rouben Mamoulian, "Notes From the Desk Pad," August-September 1968.

¹⁸This seems unlikely in 1923.

¹⁹Why he did not sign it on the spot after so many meetings is never explained.

²⁰This relationship between mother, son, and father, appears in Mamoulian's plays and films.

²¹Virginia Mamoulian, unpublished diary, n.d. translated by Boris Mirvis. All Virginia Mamoulian quotations taken from this source.

²²The gymnasium Virginia Mamoulian attended as a girl was located in Tiflis on Loris Melicova Street.

²³Rouben Mamoulian, "In the Beginning," February 9, 1973.

²⁴_____, "The Best Advice I Ever Had," September 16, 1957.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶_____, "Notes From the Desk Pad," October 7, 1972.

²⁷Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, The Celluloid Muse: Hollywood Directors Speak (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969), 129.

²⁸Becvar's account from a private interview with Mamoulian in 1973 puts the stay at six years.

²⁹Oral history, Columbia University.

³⁰The Sunday Times (London), November 12, 1922, p. 6.

³¹Mel Gordon, The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia. A Workbook for Actors (New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1987), 73-4.

³²Ibid., p.78.

³³Nicolas Slonimsky, Perfect Pitch (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), 82.

Chapter 2. EXPERIMENTATION WITH OPERA IN ROCHESTER

¹Slonimsky, p. 84.

²Ibid.

³Paul Horgan, A Certain Climate: Essays in History, Arts, and Letters (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 199.

⁴Rouben Mamoulian, interview by James Silke and James Blue, April 30, 1970, American Film Institute, Los Angeles. Here, Mamoulian is discussing film work, but interviewees consistently confirmed Mamoulian's attitude toward improvisation as applying to stage work as well, throughout his career.

⁵Horgan, p. 201-2.

⁶Ibid., p. 205-6.

⁷Ibid., p. 207.

⁸Ibid., p. 208.

⁹Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁰See Becvar for detailed coverage of reviews of Mamoulian's Rochester productions.

¹¹Becvar, p. 50.

¹²Don McDonagh, Martha Graham: A Biography (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 44.

¹³_____, "A Chat With Martha Graham," Ballet Review, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 27.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Hal Foster, "The Expressive Fallacy," in Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics (Seattle: Bay Press, 1985), 77.

¹⁶Otto Luening, telephone interview with the author, October 17, 1987, New York.

¹⁷For a complete listing, see Appendix A.

¹⁸Lawrence Langner, The Magic Curtain (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 225-6.

Chapter 3. THE THEATRE GUILD AND PORGY

¹Langner, p. 226.

²Ibid.

³Bennett T. Oberstein, "Conversations With Mamoulian," (unpublished transcript, Indiana University Department of Theatre and Drama, Bloomington, 1973), p. 9.

⁴Porter S. Woods, "The Negro on Broadway: The Transition Years, 1920-1930," (unpublished D. F. A. dissertation, Yale University, 1965), p. 80.

⁵Rouben Mamoulian, interview with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, November 27, 1927, sec. D, p.13.

⁶Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 8-9.

⁷As if they possessed the authority to make a credible assessment.

⁸Rouben Mamoulian, interview following screening of Love Me Tonight, May 2, 1984, American Film Institute, Los Angeles.

⁹Mamoulian introduced the singing of spirituals and other stage music into the play.

¹⁰Woods, p. 14.

¹¹Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 120. For a complete account of the twenty-eight moments in the "Symphony of Noises" see Oberstein, "The Broadway Directing Career of Rouben Mamoulian," p. 121-2.

¹²Ibid., p. 109.

¹³Woods, p. 75.

¹⁴The News & Courier (Charleston, S. C.), Jan. 16, 1929.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 55.

¹⁷Howard Barnes, "The Power Behind the Showshop Thrones: The Proof of a Play is in Its Direction," Theatre Magazine, Dec., 1929.

¹⁸Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 9.

¹⁹Woods, p. 74.

²⁰Ibid., p. 74-6.

²¹Rouben Mamoulian, oral history, Columbia University.

²²Max Reinhardt, interview, N. Y. World, December 17, 1927.

²³Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 42.

Chapter 4. THE BROADWAY YEAR: THE TWENTIES

¹Sunday Graphic (London), April 14, 1929.

²Hannen Swaffer, "Ten Little Nigger Boys," The Sunday Express (London), April 14, 1929.

³Truth (London), April 17, 1929.

⁴The Spectator (London), April 20, 1929.

⁵Actually, Philip Moeller was O'Neill's first choice for a director at the Guild, but Moeller didn't like the script. Rather, he was interested in directing Strange Interlude, which he did direct, and which went into production shortly after Marco Millions.

⁶Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 33.

⁷Robert Rockmore, attorney, theatrical producer, and friend of O'Neill.

⁸Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 646.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 14.

¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

¹²Sanford Meisner, telephone interview with the author, October 17, 1987, New York.

¹³My math calculations total eighteen days if figured at a constant rate.

¹⁴Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 34.

¹⁵Sarris.

¹⁶Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 35.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Becvar, p. 95.

²⁰One can safely assume that this was not a period spent unsuccessfully seeking employment, but vacationing in Europe, as Mamoulion would do regularly during each summer.

²¹Becvar, p. 96.

²²Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 53.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 86-8.

²⁵Ibid. Also consider that when Mamoulian saw Baxter thirty years later, it was well known in the film industry that Mamoulian would be directing and casting the upcoming film Cleopatra.

²⁶Alison Smith, World, November 29, 1928.

²⁷Arthur Pollack, Eagle, November 13, 1928.

²⁸George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey.

²⁹Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 21.

³⁰Ibid., p. 22.

³¹Italics mine.

³²In the original playscript, Lightfoot runs out of the cabinet meeting after being turned down and is hit by a truck and killed.

³³Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 23-24.

³⁴Ibid., p. 25.

³⁵May, 2, 1984, AFI interview.

Chapter 5. APPLAUSE AND FILMMAKING

¹Becvar, p. 103.

²Adolph Zukor, founder and head of Paramount Pictures.

³Neal Gabler, An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood (New York: Crown Publications, 1988), 203-4.

⁴Ibid., p. 204-5.

⁵More about Wanger and Mamoulian in Chapter 9 discussion of Cleopatra.

⁶Gabler, p. 203.

⁷Eric Sherman, Directing the Film: Film Directors on Their Art (Los Angeles: Acrobat Books, 1976), 12-13.

⁸Rouben Mamoulian, interview with Arthur Knight, February 2, 1972, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Mamoulian couldn't remember the name of the "dog" script.

⁹Although his 1931 film, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, also owes a great deal to German Expressionism.

¹⁰For a detailed discussion of Mamoulian's films, see Milne.

¹¹Milne, p. 20.

¹²Mamoulian uses this term in his interviews with Bennett T. Oberstein.

¹³Rouben Mamoulian, "EXCERPTS FROM: PANEL DISCUSSION: THE EFFECTS OF THE COMING OF SOUND ON ACTING AND DIRECTING IN THE AMERICAN FILM AT EASTMAN HOUSE IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK--1974 SPONSORED BY BOSTON UNIVERSITY AND EASTMAN HOUSE," notes from private papers.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Hollywood Filmograph, July 13, 1929.

¹⁷Al Wilkie, "Highlights of 'Applause,'" contained within the Production Code files of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. (MPPDA), Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, (AMPAS), Beverly Hills.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Applause file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

²⁰AFI.

²¹Applause file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴New York Times, November 26, 1929.

²⁵Gilbert Gabriel, "Rolland at Guild. 'The Game of Love and Death,' a Stately Pastime--for Its Actors," New York American, November, 26, 1929.

²⁶Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 3.

²⁷On tour, the young Katharine Hepburn assumed her first role in a major production, as Katia the maid.

²⁸Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 15.

²⁹Langner, p. 249.

³⁰Charles Higham, Bette: The Life of Bette Davis (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1951) 38.

³¹Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 26-7.

³²Ibid., p. 28.

Chapter 6. THE HOLLYWOOD YEARS: THE EARLY THIRTIES

¹Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 18.

²Milne, p. 33.

³Joseph Breen, letter to Paramount Pictures, December 10, 1936, City Streets file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

⁴Richard J. Anobile, ed. Rouben Mamoulian's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Starring Fredric March (New York: Darien House, Inc., 1975), 16-18.

⁵This subjective viewpoint, though not daring or innovative today, was considered so in 1931. Years later, the technique was frequently used by Alfred Hitchcock to create suspense and implicate the viewer as voyeur.

⁶Virginia Wright Wexman, "Horrors of the Body: Hollywood's Discourse on Beauty and Rouben Mamoulian's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," chapter 10 of William Veeder and Gordin Hirsch, eds., Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde After One Hundred Years (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 283.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 285.

⁹Ibid., p. 291.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 286.

- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Anobile, p. 19.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 20.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 42.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 45.
- ¹⁷Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 3.
- ¹⁸John Kobal, People Will Talk (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 359.
- ¹⁹Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde file, MPPDA, AMPAS.
- ²⁰Rouben Mamoulian, interview with Steven Greenberg, April 11, 1977, "Sex in Cinema" seminar, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.
- ²¹Gene Ringgold and Dewitt Bodeen, Chevalier: The Films and Career of Maurice Chevalier (Secaucus, NJ.: The Citadel Press, 1973), 2.
- ²²Gabler, p.204.
- ²³Coincidentally, the two men were classmates as children at the Lycee Montaigne in Paris.
- ²⁴Milne, p. 54.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 54-5.
- ²⁶personal viewing.
- ²⁷Jason Joy, letter to James B. Fitzgerald of the Washington, D. C. Film Board of Trade, August 11, 1932. Love Me Tonight file, MPPDA, AMPAS.
- ²⁸Love Me Tonight file, MPPDA, AMPAS.
- ²⁹Ringgold and Bodeen, p. 110-12.
- ³⁰Marlene Dietrich, letter to Ray Smith, n. d., private collection.
- ³¹The cigarette lighting scene and the accompanying background music are identical to those at the end of the Bette Davis film, Now, Voyager.
- ³²Milne, p. 68, 70.

³³English lyrics to Friedrich Hollander's song
 "Johnny," Song of Songs file, MPPDA, AMPAS:

Johnny--when will your birthday be
 Reserve that night for me
 Just me and you--

Johnny--we'll disconnect the phone
 And when we're all alone
 We'll have a birthday party--

Johnny--I've got to celebrate
 And I can hardly wait
 Until we do--

Johnny--I hope you realize
 That there's a real surprise
 In store for you--

Johnny--I need your sympathy--
 There's something wrong with me
 I can't say "No"

Johnny--All night I long for you
 And I'm so strong for you
 You make me weak--oh

Johnny--you know I'll not refuse
 What have I got to lose?
 Come on--let's go!

Johnny--What are you leery of?
 I want some loving
 And I don't mean love

Dietrich claimed throughout her career that she had never sung this song in English, only in German, as no English lyrics existed. In Song of Songs she sings the song in English.

³⁴Rouben Mamoulian, letter to A. M. Botsford, Song of Songs file, MPPDA, AMPAS. See Appendix B.

³⁵_____, interview with Paul Kozak and Frank Merwald.

³⁶Illustration 7, is a photograph of a painting reproduced from an original photograph of Mamoulian's influential Grandmother Kate. The idea for the tabula rasa at the end of Queen Christina was inspired by her image in this picture which Mamoulian spoke to everyday seeking spiritual guidance.

³⁷Queen Christina file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Mamoulian's return to M. G. M. in 1947 with Summer Holiday, was under the newly-formed independent Freed Unit, as was his subsequent M. G. M. film, Silk Stockings, in 1956, after Mayer had already been discharged from his position and replaced by Dore Schary.

⁴⁰Technicolor had already been in use for several years in Disney animation.

⁴¹No doubt the 1958 film Porgy and Bess, from which Mamoulian was fired, would have been a color masterpiece of folk art. But the documentation on his work for Porgy and Bess makes no mention of his color concepts as does the documentation on Cleopatra.

⁴²Milne, p. 91.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Sarris.

Chapter 7. THE HOLLYWOOD YEARS: THE FORTIES

¹Warren P. Munsell, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, Theatre Guild Archives, Bienecke Rare Book Collection, Yale University, New Haven.

²see Charles Hamm, "The Theatre Guild Production of Porgy and Bess," Journal of the American Musicological Society, n. d., p. 495-531.

³Ibid., p.523-4.

⁴Mamoulian's demand for verisimilitude extended only as far as the superficialities of appearance were concerned. More likely, this objection was to a hint of reality invading the creation of a mythic world.

⁵see Oberstein and Becvar.

⁶Gabler, p. 203.

⁷M. G. M. bought the rights to the film in order to mount a remake for Mario Lanza in 1950, but the film was

never made for fear of criticism over negative ethnic stereotyping.

⁸The Gay Desperado file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

⁹Milne, p. 106.

¹⁰David Robb, "Directors Guild Born Out of Fear 50 Years Ago," Variety, October 29, 1985, p. 1.

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²It was Biberman who had beaten Mamoulian in the bid to direct Roar China for the Theatre Guild in 1930, resulting in Mamoulian's break with the Theatre Guild and his move to Hollywood. A decade later, Biberman went on to be convicted and imprisoned as one of the notorious "Hollywood Ten."

¹³"Film Director Guild Labor Hearing Opens," Citizen News (Hollywood), August 29, 1938.

¹⁴Vincent DePascal, press release, Foreign Press Association, October 13, 1937, Rome, contained within Mamoulian personal scrapbook. Photographs of the visit accompany the press release.

¹⁵Daily Variety, August 13, 1938, p. 6.

¹⁶Daily Variety, August 31, 1938, p. 1, 3.

¹⁷"Notes Taken at Meeting of Screen Directors Guild, October 19, 1938," Directors Guild of America archives, California State College at Northridge.

¹⁸"Minutes of Special Meeting, April 3, 1939," DGA Archives.

¹⁹Daily Variety, August 31, 1938, p. 3.

²⁰William Holden, unpublished interview with Bennett T. Oberstein, Los Angeles.

²¹Golden Boy file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

²²Ibid.

²³"Rough Notes on; THE MARK OF ZORRO (conference on the New Treatment of April, 1939)," May 1, 1939, The Mark of Zorro file, Twentieth Century-Fox Archives, University of California at Los Angeles.

²⁴William A. Drake, correspondence to Raymond Griffith, August 18, 1939, The Mark of Zorro file, UCLA.

²⁵Joseph L. Breen, letter, January 16, 1941, The Mark of Zorro file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

²⁶Milne, p. 128.

²⁷Darryl Zanuck, memorandum to Rouben Mamoulian, January 27, 1941, Blood and Sand file, UCLA.

²⁸Joseph L. Breen, letter to Colonel Jason S. Joy, n. d., Blood and Sand file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

²⁹Milne, p. 135.

³⁰Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 58.

³¹Rings on Her Fingers file, MPPDA, AMPAS.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

Chapter 8. BROADWAY AND HOLLYWOOD: THE FORTIES

¹Saroyan was an Armenian-American from Fresno, California, the center of a large Armenian community with which the Mamoulian family, particularly Virginia Mamoulian, had extensive connections.

²Oberstein, "Conversations," p. 86.

³Hugh Fordin, Getting to Know Him: A Biography of Oscar Hammerstein II (New York: Random House, 1977), 194n.

⁴Theresa Helburn, A Wayward Quest (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1960), 282.

⁵Theodor W. Adorno, Introduction to the Sociology of Music, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1976), 24.

⁶Agned de Mille, Dance to the Piper (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), 324.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Rouben Mamoulian, private papers, n. d. Abbott's remarks were corroborated by Alfred Drake in an interview with the author, September 6, 1988, New York.

⁹Lawrence Langner, telephone conversation with Rouben Mamoulian, June 16, 1943, Theatre Guild Archives.

¹⁰Theatre Guild, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, June 19, 1943, Theatre Guild Archives.

¹¹Rouben Mamoulian, letter to Theresa Helburn and Lawrence Langner, June 23, 1943, Theatre Guild Archives.

¹²Otto Friedrich, City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row, 1987), 82.

¹³When Preminger took over the film he had the portrait replaced by a painted-over photograph.

¹⁴"Shooting Script," Laura file, UCLA.

¹⁵Darryl Zanuck, memorandum to story department, November 1, 1943, Laura file, UCLA.

¹⁶Friedrich, p. 134.

¹⁷Oberstein, "The Broadway Directing Career of Rouben Mamoulian," p. 269.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 270-1.

²⁰Ibid., p. 271.

²¹Ibid., p. 272.

²²Langner, p.153-4.

²³Hugh Fordin, The Movies' Greatest Musicals: Produced in Hollywood USA by the Freed Unit (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1974), 186.

²⁴Ibid., p. 189.

²⁵Philip K. Scheuer, "The New American Theater Linked With Old Clock," Los Angeles Times, May 5, 1946.

²⁶Theatre Guild, telegram to Rouben Mamoulian, January 25, 1946, Theatre Guild Archives.

²⁷Pearl Bailey, The Raw Pearl (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), 65.

²⁸Kronenberger, review of St. Louis Woman, n. d., Shubert Archives, New York.

²⁹Rouben Mamoulian, letter to the Theatre Guild, April 6, 1946, Theatre Guild Archives.

³⁰_____, letter to Theatre Guild, April 29, 1946, Theatre Guild Archives.

³¹Fordin, Freed Unit, p. 199-200.

³²Ibid., p. 188.

³³"Theme," shooting script synopsis, June 13, 1946, Summer Holiday file, Arthur Freed Collection, Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

³⁴Alton Cook, World-Telegram, June 11, 1948.

³⁵Armina Marshall, "Monday Executive Meeting, January 12, 1948," memorandum to Theresa Helburn, Theatre Guild Archives.

³⁶William Jaffe, attorney, letter to Theatre Guild ATT: Lawrence Langner, July 27, 1948, Theatre Guild Archives.

³⁷Rouben Mamoulian, letter to Lawrence Langner, February 15, 1947, Theatre Guild Archives.

³⁸Theresa Helburn, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, February 4, 1948, Theatre Guild Archives.

³⁹Lawrence Langner, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, July 8, 1948, Theatre Guild Archives.

⁴⁰Oberstein, "The Broadway Career of Rouben Mamoulian," p. 318-19.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 319-20.

⁴²Joseph Hayes, letter to the author, n. d. (received September 1988).

⁴³Oberstein, "The Broadway Directing Career of Rouben Mamoulian," p. 211-13.

⁴⁴Kurt Weill, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, January 22, 1946, Kurt Weill Foundation Archives, New York.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Arthur Pollack, "'Lost in the Stars" A Beautiful Tragedy," The Daily Compass, n. d. (November 1949).

⁴⁷John Mason Brown, "Seeing Things Lost in the Stars," Saturday Review, November 26, 1949. p.32-3.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Sydney J. Harris, "Lost in the Stars Fails to Hit Mark," Chicago Daily News, n. d.

⁵⁰Arthur Pollack, "Lost in the Stars Shows Theatre's New Honesty," The Daily Compass, n. d., p. 18.

⁵¹Morton Gould, telephone interview with the author, September 23, 1988, New York.

⁵²Sarris.

Chapter 9. DECLINE: THE FIFTIES AND BEYOND

¹New York Herald Tribune, July 3, 1950.

²New York Times, December 12, 1954.

³Fordin, Freed Unit, p. 443-4.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 451.

⁶Arthur Freed, letter to Rouben Mamoulian, November 7, 1956, Silk Stockings file, Freed Collection, USC.

⁷Unit Manager's report and other financial documents from Silk Stockings file, Freed Collection, USC.

⁸Rouben Mamoulian, miscellaneous memorandum, Silk Stockings file, Freed Collection, USC.

⁹Arthur Marx, Goldwyn: A Biography of the Man Behind the Myth (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), 445.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 451-2.

¹¹Rouben Mamoulian, excerpts from "Special Board Meeting" transcript, p. 1, July 29, 1958, DGA Archives.

¹²Ibid., p. 3.

¹³Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Marx, p. 453.

¹⁶I. H. Prinzmetal, attorneys, letter to Screen Directors Guild quoting from Whipper's press statement, August 7, 1958, DGA Archives.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Irving Lazar, telegram to George Sidney, SDG president, August 10, 1958, DGA Archives.

¹⁹Marx, p. 446.

²⁰Ibid., p. 447-8.

²¹Ibid., p. 448.

²²A. Scott Berg, Goldwyn: A Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 178.

²³Otto Preminger, transcribed notes from SDG meeting, p. 3, February 2, 1959, DGA Archives.

²⁴Kenneth L. Geist, Pictures Will Talk: The Life and Films of Joseph L. Mankiewicz (New York: DaCapo Press, 1978), 321.

²⁵Ibid., p. 308-9.

²⁶Ibid., p. 309.

²⁷Walter Wanger, memorandum to Rouben Mamoulian, July 27, 1960, Cleopatra file, Walter Wanger Archives, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

²⁸Geist, p. 310.

²⁹Dorris Johnson and Ellen Leventhal, eds., The Letters of Nunnally Johnson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 182-3.

³⁰Leonard Mosley, Zanuck: The Rise and Fall of Hollywood's Last Tycoon (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), 325.

³¹Geist, p. 311.

³²Ibid.

³³Walter Wanger, "Mamouljian Notes January 21, 1961," Cleopatra file, Wanger Archives.

³⁴Hollywood Reporter, March 30, 1961.

³⁵Rouben Mamouljian, "Shakespeare's Hostile Critics," n. d., p. 9, private papers.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁸Variety, October 4, 1966.

³⁹New York Times, November 20, 1966.

Conclusion

¹Rouben Mamouljian, "Notes From the Desk Pad," January 1967.

²Rouben Mamouljian, interview with Steven Greenberg for "Sex in Cinema" panel, April 11, 1977, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

³Rouben Mamouljian, interview with Peter Bogdanovich, Bruce Dern, Sidney Pollack, Ernst Tidyman, and Bennett Tramer, "Art of Survival" film conference, April 7, 1972, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

⁴Rouben Mamouljian, "Random Thoughts: God," n. d.

⁵Adorno, p. 57.

⁶Foster, p. 192.

⁷Rouben Mamouljian, "Notes From the Desk Pad," August 7, 1967.

⁸_____, "Notes From the Desk Pad," August 1968.

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