

**ARISTOPHANES AND THE SUBURBS OF THE WORLD:
THE GAME OF WEALTH AND POVERTY**

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The article considers some recent adaptations of the last extant Aristophanic comedy, *Ploutos* (388 B.C.E.), all staged in the suburbs of the world and in most difficult social and economic situations. Special attention is given to *The Game of Wealth and Poverty*, a Senegalese version of *Ploutos* in Wolof, Italian and French produced in Diol Kadd (Senegal) and staged in the outskirts of Milan (25-28 July 2008), written and directed by Mandiaye N'Diaye. This production is examined in parallel with a previous free version from *Ploutos*, in which the same director worked as an actor and which seems in a way the 'father' of the present production (*All'inferno! Affresco da Aristofane*, 1996: written and directed by Marco Martinelli, produced by Ravenna Teatro, Tam Teatro Musica, KismetOpera, 1996). The Senegalese production in particular is part of an artistic and social project which involves the community of Diol Kadd. Mandiaye N'Diaye freely adapts the aristophanic plot in order to create a choral performance with a strong African identity, mostly derived from traditional and ritual elements such as the 'sabâr circle'. The comparison between the 2008 and 1996 productions allows us to isolate and justify some common and peculiar aspects, to see how and why the ancient Greek Comedy seems to fit perfectly difficult situations and to answer vital questions, especially in the suburbs of the world and among young people; it is more and more frequently chosen, thus, as a subject for theatre productions that are also part of social projects. For instance, the Senegalese project, beyond the stage produces many economic and social benefits in Diol Kadd (see the website www.diolkadd.org). An impossible dream, just as in Aristophanes' comedies, sometimes may come true and thus appears especially encouraging, along with other good signs for the future: theatre incorporates, as a social mission, a hope for the hopeless.