

## **Women's power over men through sexuality: Thoughts from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata***

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It is true that women have undergone many obstacles and deprivations in their journey on earth, but notorious Athenian comedian Aristophanes has left us with a different perception on women's nature in classical antiquity. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* shows how women attempted to end the world by capitalizing on their sexuality. For philistine eyes of modern world, *Lysistrata* becomes a mere play on sex, but it was also about gender, war and the construction of masculinity and femininity. Our main purposes in writing this paper are:

- (1) To evaluate *Lysistrata* as a political satire which shows sexuality as women's ultimate tool over men
- (2) To represent the comedic nature of *Lysistrata* in a modern context; namely, why women's choices constitute a comedy, and the implications of a modernized version being comedic

Other questions we seek to answer are: why do women still lack agency? Why is the concept of women's autonomy comedic? In order to fulfill the above objectives of our research paper, we will use Aristophanes' play as a tool to reveal his intended humour and sarcasm directed at Greek male domination. Today *Lysistrata* is one of most popular of Aristophanes' plays, as people recognize the plot even if they are unfamiliar with the playwright. The play is set in Athens during the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta; it shows how Greek women deprived their men from having sex with them in order to end this war. The historical context of Athens was another pivotal fact which inspired Aristophanes, because Athenian glory was in turmoil at the time *Lysistrata* performed. People lost their faith in great Athenians such as Pericles due to the defeat by Sparta. However there are other aspects of the play, which have to be analyzed in order to grasp the meaning of *Lysistrata* during the time it was written, and also to consider what it means to translate the comedy into a modern day perspective. There are several steps to this analysis: first, unpacking the gender paradigms and exploring what Aristophanes intended by portraying the male and female characters the way he does; second, analyzing the text and the nature of the relationship between men and women classical Greek era. This play depicts how quickly men are enfeebled by their libido and how strongly women use sexuality as a tool. An outcome of the research paper reader will be an understanding of the unchanging value of women's sexuality as an icon in their power over men.

Key words : Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, Sexuality, Power, Women, Athens, War