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A Woman's War: The Global Feminist Impact of the Reclamation and Emulation of Lysistrata

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A Woman's War: The Global Feminist Impact of the Reclamation and Emulation of

Lysistrata

Can one consider literature, art, film, or theatre created by men, despite the presence of empowered and intelligent female characters, as truly and accurately feminist? This presentation seeks to answer this question through calling forth the concept proposed by Sue-Ellen Case in her book *Feminism and Theatre* of the “male-produced” woman, and the unrealistic image that product has created for women through time. This presentation explores the idea that when these male-written female characters are reclaimed by female audiences, they can indeed become truly feminist despite the societal idea of women perpetuated through those characters. That those characters can even be used to inspire and empower women worldwide. The proof of this concept is demonstrated in the use of four examples of modern female organized and led movements in the past twenty-five years. Two of these examples are from 2003, one is the Lysistrata Project, an organized global reading of *Lysistrata* to protest the war in Iraq, and the second is the Liberian sex protests organized by Leymah Gbowee in response to civil war. These organizations followed the example of Aristophanes' title character Lysistrata by withholding sex from partners to protest war and affect change in communities, countries, and the world. This study is presented for any scholar interested in understanding how art, and more specifically theatre, can spark revolution and desire for change in the audiences who read or watch it, and even more so how theatre can equip theatregoers with the tools and inspiration to stand for their beliefs.