

Comparative Analysis (700 *words*): *Lysistrata* and *Chi-Raq*

Due Session 6

This critical essay of 700 words is a comparative analysis between a character in Aristophanes' play, *Lysistrata* (411 B.C), and a character/actor in Spike Lee's film, *Chi-Raq* (2015). Remember: this is a draft, not the final essay. Thus far each of you has submitted one close reading assignment (CR2) on the play or film, with some students already attempting a comparative analysis. The task at hand is for you to provide an interesting (maybe not entirely smooth at this point) correlation between a character in the play and a character/actor in the film.

→ **Choosing a Topic within the Comparative Analysis**

You have plenty of room to create your own topic. This does not have to be an essay about the main characters, and it does not have to be an essay about notions of femininity and masculinity in relation to sexuality. Remember, our class theme is "comedy, gender, and the body," so you are welcome to consider these in relation to the comparative work.

→ **Pre-Writing**

Pre-writing is a necessary component before moving forward and writing your essay, mainly to assert YOUR point of view and to remain organized so as to develop a *thesis*. You might keep in mind how you can include your CR2 into the essay – perhaps the CR2 might be revised as a thesis/introductory paragraph, or rewritten and utilized as a body paragraph. My hope is that you incorporate the CR2, in part because here is writing that will see more revisions.

Before attempting any new writing between the play and the film, take a moment to *think* about both, jotting down a few notes to get a sense of *your* literal meaning of the plots and the most striking characters of interest to you. Then, and setting aside the film for now, *think* about your character in *Lysistrata* and the analysis you would like to pursue. Consider the following questions as you examine your character:

- When does the character first enter the play?
- How does s/he enter the play?
- How are they characterized? Does that characterization change?
- Select one or two scenes that you can more closely examine and include in the essay.

A suggestion, perhaps establish which camp you're in, either the women's or the men's, unless your argument is a contrast between a female character and a male character. The next step is for you to then compare or contrast this character from *Lysistrata* to a character in the *Chi-Raq*, following the same model above.

Your characters are: _____

Your thesis is: _____

The challenge is to establish what you're writing about in *Lysistrata* and then apply that thinking as a model for examining and writing about *Chi-Raq*. This is comparative analysis in its pre-writing stage.

→ ***The Actual Writing***

Now for the actual writing, there are three components to an essay:

Introduction (or first paragraph): Explain your topic and the approach to the topic, which renders the *thesis* (and the significance of this comparative character analysis).

Body (second, third, and maybe fourth paragraphs): Writers often begin with the body paragraphs of an essay versus beginning with the introduction, partly because the body paragraphs will help them arrive at a thesis. (Think about how you might include CR2 in your essay).

Conclusion (final paragraph or paragraphs): A conclusion is not about repeating or reflecting upon or summarizing what you have written. Instead, push your thinking forward into new terrain. You want to express to the reader that by comparing these two characters (one from the play, one from the film) you have arrived at something entirely new that has not been talked about or realized in *Lysistrata* or *Chi-Raq*. Perhaps the very experience of watching *Chi-Raq* offers better insight into a character in the play OR perhaps *Lysistrata* allowed you an understanding to interpret the character/actor in the film.

→ **Basic Writing Tips**

- MLA format
- 11 or 12 pt font
- 1 inch margins
- double spaced
- add name and other information to top left corner
- center paper's title

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