Lysistrata

Your Name (First M. Last)

School or Institution Name (University at Place or Town, State)

**Lysistrata** is one of the most celebrated ancient Greek comedies in history. It was written by **Aristophanes** and was performed originally in the classical Athens in around 411 BC. It was all about women's efforts who netted a plan to end the **Peloponnesian War** between Athens and Sparta and said no to the sexual desires of men until they ended the war. It was a play that had a comic touch in it but there could be seen gender roles, war, power and corruption, politics and disobedience as other major themes. This play has torched a light on human nature and helped man to know himself as it could be seen that man has been presented in this play as powerless and feeble individual before their physical desires. This play helped people so that they could know about their weakness and especially pointed men’s helplessness who were not ready to end the war but with time they realized that they are slaves of their desires. When the wives of all the men who participated in war refused to satisfy their sexual desire, they become helpless in front of their wives and this was an illustration that let the man know what he really was and what weaknesses he had. This Greek drama proved man’s feeble nature. Man was looked down as the supreme authority after his Creator, but rebellious attitude of women showed them that they were the slaves of worldly desires. They wanted to satisfy their needs so they forgot their status and become paralyzed before all those that would keep them happy including the woman.

**Themes**

In this BBC documentary of Lysistrata, there could be witnessed various themes but few of the most prominent themes were war and peace, gender roles and the battle of sexes and sexuality and democracy etc. War became the reason of collapse of the Athenian supremacy as both the states of Greece (Athens and Sparta) battled against each other and peace was demanded by the women of that time. Women depicted feministic strength when they planned to end the war and sent a message that war could be never beneficial for anyone and men of both Athens and Sparta realized that they are important for each other as they used to protect each other from the external dangers and conspiracies for long. Women were of the view that war had only brought miseries and devastation to life. In this play, theme of war and peace has been used as source that delivered a message to the general audience that war had brought destruction for families as sons and husbands have to stay away in the battle fields.

Another major theme that could be analyzed in this play is sex. After the in-depth analysis of play it could be said that sex become one of the important weapons for women who fought against men. They wanted to end the war between the two Greek states and sex was used as a tool. Women used sexual tool to seize control over men of both states. Extreme desire of sex forced men to surrender in front of their wives. Weapon of sex was used by Lysistrata that motivated men to negotiate the war. Disobedience of women could be analyzed when they said no to sex that makes their husbands to give up war and set peace in both states. Men were looked upon as a figure that overpowered women but use of comic touch showed that men were weak and helpless in front of their sexual desires for which they bowed before females whom they used to consider weak. Both these themes were familiar to me as war and peace as well as sex had been there in world since the beginning and will be there till its end, maybe the form of war and peace would change but the basic idea would remain same.

**How to update Lysistrata**

Undoubtedly, BBC production has presented this ancient Greek play in the best possible way. They have used the most appropriate cast and characters and had shown all the major themes, but this fact could not be denied that there could be found a way to make things better according to the present times, circumstances and surroundings. I as the director of this play would have made certain changes as per the present time. If I were the director i would have incorporated an element of feminism in this play. I would have made this play little more attention holding and I would have torched a light on the women power, as females have always been considered weak by the patriarchal society. At the end, I would have supported equality for both men and women if I were the director of this BBC documentary. As the director of the play I would have paid more attention on the role of women that no society could be run without the cooperation of women.

I would have updated some scenes in which women were given more representation in politics. I would have given more credit to Lysistrata who moved against the tides and broke the conventions and become the first woman who took part in political decisions that was not possible in past (Kochman et al., 2019). Secondly, I would have updated the concept that women could prove better leader as this fact cannot be overlooked that in case of wars men completely overlook the emotions, pains and sufferings of people but women could not do that at all. In this play, democratic practices were informed as, during that time, democracy was the popularly accepted form of government.

**Theater an institution that trained about democracy**

This play has actually demonstrated how important democracy could be for people. Greeks were first who introduced and practiced democracy for the very first time in history. BBC focused its attention and proved that democracy had been the most important form of government. BBC documentary spotted light on democracy and the importance of theatre. It claimed that theatres were used by Greeks to train people about democracy. After the study of Greek society, it could be analyzed that Greece was a democratic society; all the political matters and government management were left up to the people, as democracy means the government of people, by the people and for the people. There is another aspect that must be considered here and that is, women were not given the right to make any decision that was directly linked with government, but Lysistrata broke the norms and become the women leader who becomes voice of all the women who worked hard to bring peace to the society. She refused to obey the Magistrate and showed that women have the power to rule patriarchal society and authorities.

**Depiction of democratic practices**

The first conception that informed about democratic practices of that time was an act when all the women gathered at one platform so that they all could have one demand without any contradiction.

The second concept that informed and trained about democracy was the arrival of men from both states (Athens and Sparta). It showed that they took a decision that they would go to their wives as they became frustrated of their sexual needs.

Third and the most important part of the play that depicted and informed about the democratic practice was that Lysistrata humiliated the Magistrate and forced him to dress up like a woman. After the humiliation of the Magistrate, no authority came to the women and let the women decide what they want, which clearly portrayed the democratic practice. This democratic practice gave a message that people were not bound to obey any authorities and decision took by major were appreciated under all circumstances.

References:

Kochman, S. (2019). Translating Referential Humour: Lysistrata 1093–4. *Translation and Literature*, *28*(1), 28-43.