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| **Quote** | **Section of Play, Characters & Plot** | **Link to Athenian politics/society** | **Theme(s)** | **Conclusions about the ideas & values of the Athenians/Aristophanes?** |
| Xanthias:“he comes home with enough wax under his fingernails to furnish a beehive.” | Prologue  |  |  |  |
| Sosias (explaining his dream):“a rapacious-looking creature with a figure like a whale and a voice like a scalded sow” | Prologue  | This is a caricature of Cleon who has become influential in the Assembly because he is a good speaker. This monstrous creature is controlling the Assemblymen (who are sheep following Cleon the dog). |  | Cleon was attacked by Aristophanes for leading jurymen, who cannot think for themselves. This is dangerous because the law courts are an institution at the heart of democracy.  |
| Xanthias (speaking directly to the audience):“This is just a little fable with a moral.” | Prologue  | Greek comedy taught as well as entertained its audience. |  | Xanthias involves the audience reminds them they are the same people who meet in the Assembly (this play could be about them). They are not as far away from this world of monsters, animals and sickness as they might like to think. Aristophanes wants them to think, not just be entertained. |
| Xanthias:“The old man’s name, by the way, is Philocleon, I kid you not!” | Prologue | Names of characters:Philocleon = ‘Cleon lover’ = political allegory. Main character is sick and needs to be cured. |  | If the main character is sick, then this says something about the politicians that he follows and the uncivil habits that the city has fallen into.  |
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| Xanthias:“Oh the dirty old sod – look where he’s stuffed his head. I never thought we’d see our old Donkey discharge a juryman!” | Prologue Philocleon tries to escape the same way Odysseus tried to escape in Homer’s Odyssey – hanging off (underneath) a donkey (but gets it unheroically wrong!).He is a slapstick clown.  | Philocleon is a ‘Marathon Man’ who fought to preserve Greece against foreign enemy; he has vitality but he has been perverted by Cleon. |  | Instead of the Odyssey’s hero, this represents the monster of Cleon, who threatens civilised values. |
| Philocleon:“I long to come to court with you Some solid lasting harm to doBut now alas, it cannot beFor I am under lock and key.” | Episodes after the ParodosPhilocleon is now a tragic character (contrasts with the clown in previous scene). He is in upper window of the skene and sings like one of Euripides’ trapped heroines. | Philocleon surprises the audience by revealing a new aspect to his personality (not just a clown). In this way, the play celebrates fertility, life, toughness, and resilience of the of the countryside and old ways (appropriate for a play sacred to Dionysus).  |  | Aristophanes is attacking the greed of war – Philocleon’s main aim to harm shows how far his nature has been ‘infected’ by the greed, hatred, suspicion under Cleon’s leadership.  |
| Chorus (wasps) directed at Bdelycleon:“You enemy of the people! A monarchist! You…in cahoots with Brasidas!?” (Spartan leader) | Episodes after the ParodosThe Chorus, echoing Cleon, describes their opponents and anyone who dares to criticise the running of the democracy or the juries as ‘totalitarian’ tyrants.  | In Athens under Cleon, no criticism (even if constructive) seems to have been tolerated.  |  | Any criticism of democracy is dismissed; the right to question things is removed from the people. Aristophanes might be using the same phrases as Cleon did.  |
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| Chorus (referring to Bdelycleon):“arty-farty pro-Spartans” | Agon  | The younger generation is usually dismissed but they might have something to offer Athens once it’s been cured. Bdelycleon has wisdom, affection and sense of duty for his father, and a desire to provide Philocleon with a classier lifestyle.  |  | Father and son represent the generation gap in Athens. If they unite and agree, Athens will be better off.  |
| Philocleon:“the power of Zeus upon his throneIs scarcely greater than my own”Bdelycleon:“You’re a slave, without knowing it” | AgonFather and son make their arguments in the debate and the chorus will judge the winner.  | Philocleon believes he is as powerful as Zeus. The chorus approves this speech.  |  |  |
| Philocleon:“puts up the best show in court” | Agon Philocleon’s arguments about being a jurer | Jurors are not held accountable for their decisions – they judge based on the performance in the court. |  | Aristophanes is criticising the lack of accountability that jurymen had in Athens – often favouring Cleon and punishing his enemies because they are duped by Cleon.  |
| Bdelycleon:“Prosecution initiated by The Dog against Labes..on the ground that…Labes..did injure one Sicilian cheese by eating it all himself.” | After the Agon (Trial of the Dog) | Cleon’s nickname was ‘the dog’ and Labes is like the real-life Laches who stole money when in command of an Athenian naval expedition to Sicily. The joke is not that he was dishonest, but that he didn’t share the stolen money with ‘the dog’, Cleon.  |  | Guilt is presumed from the beginning – Aristophanes is saying that real Athenian courts are the same under Cleon. Aristophanes arranges the scene so that ‘The Dog’ is defeated (and in following scene, Aristophanes is the saviour Herakles).  |
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| Chorus:“Yet many men find that they can change their mindWhen truly convinced by another.” | Scenes after the Parabasis (re-educating scene)During the symposium, the chorus comments on Philocleon’s change of point of view and how he agrees with his son. | The chorus stresses the need for compromise and forgiveness. The son’s motives are good – to cure his father of his obsession. The Chorus doesn’t want him to go too far in civilising the older generation because the toughness and vitality of them is what Athens needs.  |  | War-torn Athens needs compromise and forgiveness, so the father and son are symbolic of Aristophanes’ ideas for Athens.  |
| Chorus leader (on behalf of Aristophanes):“Won’t the vine look foolish when I pull away the prop.” | Second Parabasis | Aristophanes pokes fun at Cleon’s claim to be a lover of the people and denies Cleon has censored him.  |  | Aristophanes uses a good old-fashioned country image to attack the fashionable modern Athens of Cleon’s era. |
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