

The iliad essay



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A hero in the society can be defined as an individual who is admired and emulated by everyone because of his superior virtues and character that the culture or the society has. A Hero has virtues and attributes that are adored, valued and desired by many.

The ideals of a given culture are determined by the social -cultural conditions of a society or can also be greatly influenced by the views and the perceptions of the author. The motivations and the actions of a hero greatly determine the society view towards them.

The Iliad is one of the ancient literatures that date between 900 and 750 B. C. The events took place in the ancient Greek Bronze Age. During the time, the Greek region was filled with strife and there was need for strong men to provide defense to the community.

One of the heroic acts was to become a great warrior who feared nothing. In the Greek Dark Age, most of the rulers were the warrior class and they had to show the ability to defend the land and its populace.

In the Iliad, the two main heroic characters were Achilles and Hector. These two were drawn from the two main armies, that is, the Greek army and the Trojan army. These two warriors share some commonalities as well as differences (Samuel 5).

The two heroes share some common features that distinguish them as heroes. Both were great warriors from both sides. The two warriors were strong and had high confidence in themselves. During the duel between the

two warriors, they were confident that they would beat each other. The two warriors were also men of honor and had pride.

Hector refused to retreat when ordered by his father Priam while Achilles decided to avenge the death of Patroclus. Both warriors also wanted glory and everyone to respect them. Another similarity is that both warriors are faithful to their family and friends. Achilles decides to forget his differences with the Agamemnon so as to avenge the death of his friend. He also wept bitterly for the loss of his friend Patroclus (Samuel 25).

The Iliad also shows a number of differences between the two warriors. Prince Hector is viewed as an epitome of the humane warrior and a fierce fighter. He is courageous and even fights the Greek giant Ajax. He is humane and is portrayed as being a father and a loving son to his aging parents. He also loves to his wife Andromache.

On the other hand, Achilles is depicted as a rough, cruel and unmerciful warrior. He only has his mother and Patroclus his friend. Even though Hector pleads with Achilles to allow him to get a decent burial, Achilles kills Hector and drags his body on his chariot as a sign of dishonouring and disrespecting him. Achilles is mostly portrayed as a man of rage and furious. His anger towards the Agamemnon made Achilles to stop fighting for the Greeks and decided to fall back (McKenzie, 6)

Unlike Hector, Achilles fights for the glory and honour of his name. He has excessive pride and has no regard or love for his countrymen. This is seen when he withdraws from the war leaving the Greek vulnerable to death. Achilles is also very individualistic and full of vengeance. Hector is an

honourable and patriotic man. He fights to defend his own kingdom and the people of Troy as well as his honour.

Achilles is also depicted as a traditional epic hero. The Iliad discuss him as a superhuman that cannot be conquered but having a weakness only in his kneel. Hector is not deemed as invisible but as a person who can be conquered. The king urges hector not to fight Achilles indicating that Priam feared his son would be defeated.

Samuel, Butler. Homer's The Iliad. New York: Orange Street Press. 1998.
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