

# Troy versus homers illiad essay sample



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When comparing the movie Troy, directed by Wolfgang Pettersson, and The Iliad, written by Greek poet Homer we can clearly see that although Pettersson has made an excellent film he has clearly left out certain aspects of the Iliad which really define the story. Both versions portray the Trojan War between Greece and Troy, Achilles killing Hector and King Priam visiting Achilles to ask for the body of his son Hector back. However both versions do not portray accurate versions of the fight between Menelaus and Paris, nor do they correctly explain why Helen has come to reside in Troy nor does the movie portray the proper burial rights of the Greeks. This is due to the absence of the Gods and Goddesses in the movie.

Now in order to compare the two we must first explore what the movie and story are both about and the story each one follows. The Iliad starts 9 years after the beginning of the Trojan War with the Achaean (Greek) army raiding the town of Chryse and taking two women, Chryseis and Briseis.

Agamemnon claims Chryseis and Achilles claims Briseis. Neither however counted the fact that Chryseis' father, Chryses was a Priest of Apollo. After Chryses offers a huge reward for the return of his daughter and Agamemnon refuses he then prays to Apollo who in return sends a Plague upon the Achaean camp. Agamemnon consults the prophet and learns he must return his prize but in return he demands Briseis. Once hearing this, Achilles refuses to fight any longer in the war and holes himself up inside his tent. Achilles filled with his own rage and stupidity, asks his mother Thetis to ask Zeus to join the side of the Trojans, the Army the Achaeans are fighting against. Zeus complies and starts to bring his rage down upon the Achaean camp.

Finally Achilles feels bad about the actions that he has taken but still refuses to fight. He proposes a plan with Nestor that his friend Patroclus will go into battle wearing his armour in order to raise the spirits of the Achaean army. This plan backfires and Patroclus ends up dead due to Apollo knocking him to the ground and Hector slaying him. Achilles now filled with rage about the death of his dear friend Patroclus, decides it is his time to fight and rides out to battle. He slays every Trojan insight and even fights the river god Xanthus until he comes upon Hector. Achilles chases Hector around until Athena tricks Hector into turning around to fight Achilles, knowing that it will mean Hectors death. Once Achilles lands the final blow he straps Hectors body to the back of his chariot and drags the body around Patroclus' funeral bier for 9 days. His body however does not become tarnished as the Gods have put a protective spell on it.

The gods all finally agree that Hector deserves a proper burial and they send Hermes to escort King Priam, Hectors father, to Achilles tent in order to ask for his son's body back. Achilles gives up the body and Hector receives his hero's burial. The movie Troy follows a slightly different story. The movie opens with Agamemnon advancing his army towards Thessaly. King Triopas (King of Thessaly) bargains with Agamemnon, arguing that they should each present their best fighters and the fight can decide who wins rather than having a war. Achilles easily wins the fight and Agamemnon gains control over Thessaly. Meanwhile we see the Princes of Troy, Hector and Paris, in the Banquet hall belonging to King Menelaus of Sparta. Paris sneaks off to meet Helen, Menelaus' wife and convinces her to return to Troy with him. Once Menelaus finds out he vows to get revenge on Troy and asks for the help of

his brother Agamemnon. Achilles and his young cousin Patroclus are enlisted to help get revenge on Troy.

Achilles goes to seek advice from his mother who warns him that if he goes to battle against Troy he will find eternal glory but he will be doomed to die, but if he stays and does not fight he will find love, raise a family and die as an old man, happy with life. Achilles with his love to fight joins the war against Troy, not believing in what his mother has foretold of his fate. Once they land on the shores of Troy, they immediately sack a nearby town which includes a temple of Apollo and Achilles takes one of the Priestesses, Briseis, as his prize, unbeknown to him that she is the cousin of Hector and Paris. Agamemnon begins to claim that Briseis was his spoil of war which angers Achilles to the point in which he vows that one day Agamemnon will fall under his sword. We then see a clip of Helen attempting to leave Troy as she believes if she returns to Menelaus it will prevent more lives from being lost. Hector sees her and persuades her to stay, telling her she is a princess of Troy now. The next day, Agamemnon as his army march to Troy and demand the return of Helen or a war would break out.

Hector offers up his brother Paris to fight Menelaus in order to decide who would get to keep Helen. Just before Menelaus can deliver the death blow, Paris crawls to his brother's feet and hides behind him in cowardice. Hector then delivers the death blow to Menelaus which sparks the beginning of the fighting. As the fighting progresses on the battle field we see clips of Achilles and Briseis and we see that they have begun to fall in love. Achilles makes plans to return home with Briseis and his beloved cousin Patroclus. As dawn approaches on the battle field we see Achilles riding into battle which

shocks everyone but raises their spirits, unbeknown to everyone it is actually Patroclus wearing Achilles armour. Hector slits Achilles throat then removes his helmet to find that it is not Achilles like everyone believed it to be but Patroclus. Hector who is now regretting what he has done, drives his sword through Patroclus' chest to finish him off. Achilles filled with rage at the loss of his cousin rides into battle against the Trojans and slays Hector right outside the walls of Troy.

That night Achilles is visited by King Priam asking for the return of his son's body, as Achilles had taken it after slaying him. Priam explains to Achilles that Hector didn't know that it was Patroclus underneath the armour and asks Achilles how many brothers and cousins he has killed in his time. He weeps over Hectors body before giving it back to Priam and he allows Briseis to return to Troy with him. After not being attacked for 12 days the Trojans travel to the Greek camp to find a giant wooden horse, something they believe to be a gift of surrender. This is where the myth of the Trojan horse is intertwined with the story. The Trojans take the horse into the city walls, unbeknown that it contains a whored of Greek soldiers. Once night fall has appeared the Greeks begin to attack, breaking free from the horse. Achilles runs to be with Briseis but as he is with her Paris shoots him in the back of his heel, killing him. The Greeks win the battle and in the closing scene of the film we see Achilles body on a funeral pyre within the ruins of Troy.

As we can see from reading over both telling of the story, they appear greatly different. The Iliad only covers a small amount of the battle of Troy compared the movie which attempts to portray the whole war in a matter of days instead of the 11 + years the war raged on. The Iliad also has a proper

representation of burial in comparison to the movie; Homer dedicated a whole book of the Iliad to the ideals of Greek Burial. In the movie we see incorrect burials of both Patroclus and Achilles. In the movie we see them being burnt straight away on the funeral pyre instead of the detailed burial rights they received in the Iliad such as the coins over their eyes to pay the ferryman Chiron and the proper funeral procession before dawn. This feature upset me as Peterson objective in this movie was to portray the Greeks in an accurate way using the Iliad as his starting point yet he has failed to do so. Another aspect of the movie I feel does not reflect the Iliad was the lack of inclusion involving the Gods.

In the Iliad the Greek Gods played a large part of the story and in comparison with the movie they don't really play a role at all, they are non-existent. Homer really emphasized the Gods, including them in all aspects of his books. Homer has also emphasized that they were the cause of the Trojan War, bringing us back to a story which occurred just before the Iliad at the beginning of the Trojan War in which Paris was chosen to be the judge of a beauty contest involving Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite. He chose Aphrodite and as a reward he gained her favour and was allowed any woman in the world he so desired. Paris being young and now thinking of the consequences he chose Helen of Sparta (who then became known as Helen of Troy). This enraged Menelaus, Helen's husband and he declared war on Troy. We can compare this to the movie Troy which shows us that the cause of the war was also Helen going to Troy but not because she was compelled by Aphrodite but because she had fallen in love with Paris, she went to Troy on her own

free will knowing the consequences that would occur. In the Iliad Aphrodite saves Paris' life during the fight between him and Menelaus.

Just before he goes to deliver the death blow, Aphrodite blows in a storm and whisks Paris back to his chambers to be with Helen. Menelaus becomes enraged and then he declares war. We can compare this to the movie in which just before Menelaus delivers the death, Paris crawls to his brother's feet in cowardice and then Hector slays Menelaus. Both these scenes though meant to be the same are rather different as one results in the death of Menelaus and the other does not. Other gods are also portrayed in the Iliad such as Hermes, who guides King Priam to Achilles tent safely so that he can ask for the return of his son Hector's body while in the movie; King Priam makes the journey by himself. Apollo is another God who is largely featured in the Iliad but not in the movie. Apollo is one of the central figures in the Iliad as he is the one who sends the plague upon the Achaean camp and he allows Hector to kill Patroclus which leads Achilles to become involved in the war again. Apollo was the one who really kick started off the fighting between the two rival armies even though he is not the God of war.

Hephaestus, a god often forgotten was once again forgotten in the movie. He did play a part in the Iliad however. He forged Achilles new armour for him as a favour to Thetis before Achilles went to battle.

These forgotten aspects in the movie really enraged me as Peterson's ideals in the movie Troy were to try and accurately show Greek lifestyle and war yet he failed by leaving out a huge aspect which was involved in this, the Gods and Goddesses of Olympus. I personally feel that the movie should have included the Gods as many others like myself most likely feel the same.

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The gods were an essential part of Greek lifestyle. The bases of their entire civilization were based upon the will of the Gods and Peterson has seemed to just forget this. One more difference between the Iliad and Troy which managed to frustrate me immensely was the incorrect representation of Briseis in the movie and the complete lack of Chryses.

In the Iliad the kidnapping of Chryses is what started the plague in the Achaean camp, another aspect that seemed to be forgotten, which then led to Achilles anger as Chryses was returned and Briseis became wanted by Agamemnon and his eventual refusal to fight. In the movie Chryses has just seemed to vanish from existence and Briseis is now a cousin of Hector and Paris. Not to mention that in the film Achilles wasn't planning to fight as he wished to be with Briseis as he had fallen in love with her. The film portrays Homers character of Briseis completely wrong and has forgotten a main catalyst character. As someone who had knowledge of the Iliad before seeing the film it utterly enraged me. As one can obviously see Wolfgang Peterson has made an incorrect representation of Greek lifestyle and war and I personally hope that if he makes another movie which originally was a book I will never have to see it. I also hope that he comes to his senses and makes another proper representation of what he wanted to achieve.