

The theme of family in books 6 and 24 in homer's iliad.

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Term Paper 1 CORC 1110 Classical Cultures The theme of family in books 6 and 24 in Homer's Iliad. Family is very important in Books 6 and 24, but it is also one of the main themes throughout the Iliad. Book 1 begins with the vengeance taken by a father who has lost his daughter. The leaders of the Greeks are brothers, and Achilles's revenge against Hektor is caused by the loss of the brotherly love of Patroklos. And even amongst the gods, the allegiances to the Greeks or the Trojans is decided along family lines.

Artemis is on the side of the Trojans because her brother Apollo sides with them. This is why Homer's Iliad is still popular and understandable among all of us. Every time people read it they realize the themes in the book are still relevant today. In all families brother will stand up for brother, and a father should always protect his wife and children. The families in the Iliad, mortal and immortal, have the same qualities. To outsiders they are fiercely loyal to each other, but within the families lay the groundwork for each other's destruction.

The passion of Paris for Helen not only destroys his family but a whole city. Achilles leads Patroklos to his death through his stubbornness and pride. Because the lives of humans and gods in Greek mythology are so intertwined, the bickering of the immortal families often spelled certain destruction for their human subjects. In Book 6 Athene ignores the women's prayers of Priam's family because she was slighted at a family function, a wedding. A noteworthy similarity between Books 6 and 24 is the intense love Priam has for Hektor even though he is one of his fifty children.

Priam states, " I wish all of you had been killed beside the running ships in in the place of Hektor. I have had the noblest of sons in Troy, but I say not one of them is left to me... and all that are left me are disgraces, the liars and the dancers, champions of the chorus, the plunderers of their own people" (Book 24, lines 254 to 261). Priam's affection for Hektor is as strong as the bond between Thetis and Achilles, presumably because he is the only child. Thetis protects her son all the time, and she is always near him day and night.

At the same time a stark difference between Priam and Thetis is the way their children came into the world. Priam's fifty children were the result of enjoying himself, and Achilles was the result of Thetis taking the risk of great heartbreak when as a goddess she could have had a painless life. She knew that Achilles was fated to die, but she did not stop him from going to war. She knew how important it was for her son to fight for his glory. The difference in the relationships between Hektor and Priam to Thetis and Achilles illustrates a marked divide of motherly and fatherly love.

Another major difference between Book 6 and Book 24 is the family interactions of the gods. In Book 6, even though the gods are family, they disagreed about the war in Troy. And in Book 24 the family ties between the gods are shown. Apollo talks to the gods and asks them to give Hektor's body back to his father. He says that Hektor has always been good to the gods but Achilles never had justice in his heart. He disrespects Hektor's dead body by dragging it in front of his beloved companion's every day. And the gods are willing to help Achilles, not Hektor.

But Zeus is the one who will finally make the decision. He decides to give Hektor's dead body back to Priam. And this is the right thing to do. So with the help of Achilles's mother Thetis, Zeus sends him a message: " I myself am angered that in his heart's madness he holds Hektor beside the curved ships and did not give him back" (Book 24, lines 114 to 116). The shift in the difference of the interactions of the gods is important. Firstly, it shows how changeable they were and how the fate of the human families was dependent on the family relationships between the gods.

Another similarity in Books 6 and 24 is that Hektor's disregard for his wife and his son is presented as heroism. Yet, from the family point of view it was abandonment of the two people who depended on him the most. From another point of view, if Hektor had saved Troy he would have saved his wife and son as well. But as Troy was fated to fall, they lost him for nothing. Hektor's treatment of his wife is important because it is one of the main examples of how the human women are viewed in the Iliad.

As Andromache states, " Dearest, your own great strength will be your death, and you have no pity on your little son, nor on me, ill-starred, who soon must be your widow..." (Book 6, lines 406 to 408). They are only used by their fathers and disregarded by their husbands. The Iliad, like most great works, has family as one of the main themes at the heart of it. Every person's life is affected by their family or the lack of it. Mortal or immortal one's mother, father, sisters, brothers, or spouses make the most important part of one's life.

People's lives do not play out on the grand scale that the lives of the characters in the Iliad do, but the basics of family loyalty and dysfunction do not change. People have to make choices in their lives. Some people are fated to live long and happy lives with people they love. But some people are fated to live very short but colorful lives, full of risks and adventures. That is why the Iliad does not lose its significance among people to this day. Even though centuries have passed after the Iliad was written, the theme of family is still important.