

# Discuss the character of achilles in homers hiad

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



04 March The Character of Achilles in Homer's Iliad Achilles, king of Myrmidons and the valiant hero of Iliad, is one of the most illustrious characters in this epic saga, whose influence has finally determined the fate of the Greeks in the war. Considered by many as an impulsive person, Achilles is both courageous and wise but he often reacts quite outrageously both with warriors and gods. This characteristic traits seem to have been nourished in him because of his peculiar positioning as a hero who has to lead a war but he knows that he is destined to die in there because of the unique fate assigned to him by the gods, where his glory " walks hand in hand with his doom" (Peterson 2004). Thus, Achilles can be seen as suffering an existential crisis in which he has to fight for glory, which his ultimate pursuit in life, and he knows his quest will cost him his life.

A born soldier adept in the art of killing, Achilles also wants to pursue glory, like many other Greek heroes. This perception of the virtue of life takes him to Troy, to fight one of the most significant wars in human history. It becomes relevant here that before coming to Troy his mother, the sea-nymph goddess Thetis has warned him that he will die in the war. An ordinary human may have been intimidated by this situation, but Achilles decides to continue the pursuit of glory rather than avoid his death. The basic problem of his existential crisis stem from this decision and defiant nature that does not want to cringe at the dictates of the gods or the designs of fate. Thus, as befitting a hero of immaculate courage, Achilles leads his men to the battle and fights it with valor, driven by his quest for glory. The usual heroes one encounters in epic stories are God-fearing men, who acquiesce to the dictates of fate and the gods. However, Achilles seems to a

person who rather will pursue the glory that belongs to heroes, who do what they must do to attain it, irrespective of what the gods have decided as his fate. Similarly, he does not acquiesce blindly to his leader but revolts when Agamemnon bruises his honor by taking his prize, Briseis. This makes him a character that has both positive and negative traits that mark the nature of normal humans as opposed to legendary heroes. Similarly, he defiles the dead body of Hector as an act of vengeance for killing his most beloved person, Patroclus. Usual heroes, considered as kind and forgiving, do not display such traits and, thereby, Iliad portrays Achilles as the first true individual who has both problematic characteristics.

On the other hand, the noble traits in Achilles become evident when Priam, the king of Troy approaches him and requests for his son's body. Achilles offers him the honor and respect he deserves and delivers Hector's dead body to him. This shows that the hurt of having lost his friend at the hands of Hector, rather than the spite for the latter, makes him desecrate his dead body. Even the act of killing Hector can only be seen as a hero fighting against his enemy who is engaged in a battle. Thus, despite the defects in his character in terms of defiance to gods and to his fellow warriors, especially Agamemnon, Achilles emerges as a valiant hero in the hearts of his readers because of his strong and well rounded characteristic traits.

#### Works Cited

Peterson, Wolfgang. "Troy." Perf. Brad Pitt, Eric Bana, Diana Kruger, Orlando Bloom and Rose Byrne. Warner Brothers, 2004.