

Iliad Reaction Paper

One may assume that the Iliad is a book about heroes vanquishing foes, and on the surface it may be. The strongest warrior in the book, Achilles, delivers the Greeks from certain loss by killing the main foe, Hector. There is nothing more noble than that, but what if the reader takes a closer look at who Achilles is, and why the war is happening?

Homer, I believe, wants to give the reader a different view of the heroes and villains. At the start of the poem, Achilles leaves the army to fend for themselves so that Agamemnon will see how much he needs Achilles and give him his rewards. Achilles, however, does not return to war even after being offered his due rewards, he only returns to avenge the death of Patroclus.

Achilles is dead set on killing Hector and as many Trojans as he can. This is seen through the whole book. The 'heroes' are really just characters who kill the most people. The war that they are fighting is also not a noble one, it was started as revenge for having their queen, Helen, kidnapped. This devolves into both sides kidnapping people from, and wanting revenge on, each other. It is childish fighting that makes these man children feel like they are heroes, and I believe this is what Homer is trying to show the reader through the lack of character development in Achilles and everyone else.

The main point of the book can be summed up at the climax when Achilles is about to kill Hector. Instead of this being a noble killing and death, Achilles dominates and tells Hector how he will disrespect his dead body. One of Hector's dying sentences is the most damning critique one could give Achilles, "*So this is Achilles.*" (Iliad, 22.395).