Iliad review Books 19-24

*The Iliad*- Book 19 - The champion arms for battle

* Achilles returns to battle.
* Thetis presents Achilles with the magnificent armor fashioned by Hephaestus. In addition, Thetis will prevent Patroclus’ body from corruption.
* Significantly, Achilles renounces his anger and expresses regret for all the loss of life due to the rage between Agamemnon and himself.
* Observe how Homer has shaped Achilles' attitude: the girl Briseis he dismisses as an afterthought who should have been killed rather than to cause this dispute. In 20 lines he dismisses his anger, which has been nursed for the length of the epic till now.
* Agamemnon's speech is much longer. He blames Atê.
* Atê
* Agamemnon blames Atê (Ath) for his actions. Homer uses the same root word three times in these lines. Fagles translates Atê as "savage madness" on 102, "Ruin" on 106, and "she blinds us all" on 106. Agamemnon repeats his offer to give vast reparations, which Achilles had rejected in Book 9. Now he accepts them, but merely as an afterthought.
* Achilles must fight
* Contrast Achilles and Odysseus. Remember that Achilles has been raging in his tent while Odysseus has been fighting and has been wounded. For Odysseus it is not just the food that is important, it is the need for a formal apology ceremony.
* Achilles inventories his life: he addresses his dead friend, he recalls his father, mother, and son and his hope that Patroclus would have gone home after Achilles' own death to take care of Achilles' son. Now neither will go home. He is prepared for his final battle--to the death.
* The arming of Achilles echoes the arming of Patroclus in Book 16.

 The changes in Achilles

* Review Achilles on p. 470 & 478 and watch him throughout this book. He undergoes a great change of focus, the beginning of a transformation. Reflect on how and why these changes are occurring. How would you put into words what insights he is coming to.

*The Iliad*- Book 20 - The Olympian gods in arms

* In the beginning of Book 20, Zeus gives permission to all the gods to help either side each wishes. Apollo pretends to be one of Priam's sons, Lycaon, and goes to Aeneas and tells him to fight against Achilles. Aeneas realizes he would be overmatched but fights anyway. As Achilles goes in for the kill, Poseidon rescues Aeneas and makes him disappear.

*The Iliad*- Book 21 - Achilles fights the river (this is bizarro)

* Achilles kills a son of Priam, Lycaon.
* Lycaon had been surprised in an orchard one day many years ago by Achilles, who captured him and sold him into slavery. Lycaon found release and has now returned home to Troy for 12 days. Once again he meets Achilles and begs for mercy. Achilles responds that he was able to spare lives once, before Patroclus' death, but now, no more.
* Pay attention to what Achilles says to Lycaon before he kills him (119-128) and to Achilles' anger (128-155). He calls Lycaon "friend"–a term he will deny Hector. Mueller sees these words of Achilles as anticipating the Achilles who makes a pact with Priam (Mueller 71).
* The river Scamander is angry at Achilles
* The river Scamander (a.k.a. Xanthus) is angry at Achilles for slaughtering so many Trojans in its water.: "I'm choked with corpses and still you slaughter more." (248)
* The river almost kills Achilles, but Hera gets Hephaestus to burn the river. As the river sees itself boiling away, it gives up.

*The Iliad*- Book 22 - The death of Hector—here it is.

* Ares is the god of war (315).
* Preparation for Hector’s death.
* Even Hector realizes the inevitability of his impending death. Homer sets the scene: Priam sees Achilles coming on and advises Hector not to wait outside the walls to meet Achilles but to fight from inside the walls. Priam realizes that his death will be wretched.
* Hector considers an alternative plan in which he would offer reparations for Paris stealing Helen, but he rejects any other course of action than meeting Achilles as unacceptable to the implacable Achilles (150).
  + Notice that Hector would be more useful, here again, retreating back to the walls of Troy and defending his city. However, his personal heroic code takes precedence over his social role (130).
  + He recognizes that it is his “reckless pride” that has brought defeat and that shame will come to him if he returns to Troy.
  + Mueller points out the parallel between Achilles' and Hector's recognitions of their prior mistakes, how their choices now bind them, in their eyes, to courses of action that will bring their destructions. But Hector, unlike Achilles, sees less clearly and believes that he may be the equal of Achilles (Mueller 62).
* Hector is filled with fear, and Homer compares him to a cringing dove (167) while Achilles is seen as a hound pursuing a fawn (225), as Achilles chases Hector around and around the walls of Troy.
  + But notice, as Mueller interprets the passage, that Homer does not judge Hector harshly for fleeing: "and the one who fled was great but the one pursuing greater, even greater" (189). Mueller sees Hector's flight as his first *honest* act (p. 62).
* All the gods observe the race. Zeus has pity for Hector, but Athena shames him into letting her do as she pleases to help Achilles (210).
* Zeus formally holds his scales and Hector's fate weighs down, and so now there is no possibility but death (250).
* Athena disguises herself as Hector's brother Deiphobus and urges him to fight. He is deluded into a renewed courage and is ready (293). How beyond bounds is Athena's trickery, yet Hector's acting under delusion matches his self-delusion all along (Mueller 63).
* Hector and Achilles meet
* Hector proposes a pact in which both would promise that the winner allow the loser's comrades to rescue the corpse for proper burial (306).
* But Achilles rejects all pacts with vehemence: "There are no binding oaths between men and lions." (310)
* Athena repeatedly assists Achilles in the fight, deflecting a spear or retrieving one.
* Hector throws his spear, futilely, and asks Deiphobus for another. At that moment Hector realizes his fate when he no longer sees Deiphobus (350): "My time has come! …Well let me die…not without glory…in some great clash of arms that even men to come will hear of down the years." These words echo the words spoken about Patroclus in Book 16. Mueller concludes: "What Homer says about Patroclus, Hector says about himself. The simple change of pronous distinguishes the *pathos* of Patroclus' end from the *heroic defeat* of Hector. At this moment, and only at this moment, Hector is equal to Achilles, and superior to all other Iliadic characters, in the depth and intensity of his consciousness of life as limited and valorized by the fact of death" (p. 64).
* Hector accepts his fate acting in accordance with the heroic code, manfully, not cowardly.
* Finally (386), Achilles stabs Hector with a fatal thrust.
* Achilles kills Hector
* A reader must come to terms with his or her response to the killing of Hector and with Hector's death and with Achilles' victory.
* Examine the relevant lines:
  + Achilles: "I smashed your strength! And you—the dogs and birds will maul you, shame your corpse while Achaeans bury my dear friend in glory!" (395-7)
  + Hector: "I beg you, beg you by your life, your parents—don't let the dogs devour me by the Argive ships!"
  + Achilles: "Beg no more, you fawning dog…The dogs and birds will rend you—blood and bone!"
  + Achilles: "For my own death, I'll meet it freely."
  + Compare Homer's words at Hector's death (425-29) with the words at Patroclus's death (16. 1000-1005).
  + How do you respond to the killing of Hector? [Discuss Iliad Bk22 Q01]
* After the death
* Each soldier comes up to stab the dead body of Hector.
* Achilles remembers the unburied body of his friend Patroclus.
* Achilles sates his anger by piercing Hector's heels and, threading strips of rawhide through the feet, dragging Hector's body behind his chariot as he rides around the walls of Troy.
* Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache each grieves for Hector.
* So, how do you respond to Hector's death and Achilles' victory?

*The Iliad*- Book 23 - The funeral games for Patroclus

* What does Book 23 accomplish?
* We leave Book 22 with its view of Achilles' implacable revenge. How does Achilles conduct himself in Book 23 at the funeral games? What does the insertion of the funeral games immediately after the killing of Hector accomplish?

*The Iliad*- Book 24 - Achilles and Priam 

* Even Apollo finds Achilles' wrath excessive.
* Achilles continues to dishonor Hector's body by dragging it round the walls.
* Apollo says that "murderous Achilles" is a "man without a shred of decency in his heart…like a lion." The word Homer uses for murderous is oloos ( ÙloÒw ). It means destructive, fatal, deadly, murderous, but this is the only time it is applied to a human. It is always an adjective modifying natural forces. That is what Achilles has become—no longer a human but a destructive force of nature.
* Priam prepares to go to Achilles
* What courage Priam shows in resolving to go alone on the mission to Achilles to ransom his son's body. While Hecuba rightly mistrusts Achilles and wishes to eat Achilles' liver, Priam feels that he must go and even if he is wrong, he must hold his son's body one last time.
* Priam finds Achilles
* The poem ends with one of the most moving scenes in all literature. Priam kneels, hugs Achilles' knees and kisses Achilles' hands, "those terrible, man-killing hands that had slaughtered Priam's many sons in battle" (561-2). Priam opens himself to Achilles and asks Achilles to think of his own father. They sit together in silence, both weeping.

 Achilles and the two jars of Zeus

* Mueller sees in the speech of Achilles the solidarity of humans "in the face of divine indifference and persecution" (p. 74).

19

1. What is Achilles doing when Thetis approaches?

### What concern does Achilles have for the body of Patroclus? Why is it important that the body remain intact? What does Thetis do to preserve it? This is in sharp contrast to how Achilles will treat Hector’s body.

### What regret does Achilles express to Agamémnon? What does he say should have happened to Brisêis? This mirrors the fight for Helen.

### Does Achilles accept the gifts of Agamémnon? What does he say?

### How does Brisêis react when she sees the body of Patroclus? What is her physical response, and what does she say? Why do you think the poet includes this scene?

### 20

1. Why does Zeus say the other gods should enter the war?
2. Match each god or goddess with his or her adversary

Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Hera, Hermes, Leto, Hephaestus, Poseidon Xanthos

### How does Achilles respond to Tros’ plea for mercy? What does the poet say about Achilles state of mind? How do the details that follow his statement confirm it?

21

### Why does Achilles spare twelve young men in the river? This is pretty nuts.

### How does Achilles know Lycaon? How does Achilles react when he recognizes the former slave?

### Why is Xánthos’ anger aroused? What does he do for Asteropaíos?

### What is the river like as it chases Achilles?

### What does Hêra instruct Hephaestus to do to Xánthos? List a few details that describe Hêphaistos’ effect on the river.

### Why, according to Apollo, are human beings not worth fighting over? This is a great question. Make sure you answer it

### 22

### What choices does Hector mull over as he waits for Achilles? What seems to be important to him, and how does his speech fit in with the concepts presented in the rest of the poem?

### What proposition does Zeus put before the other gods, and how does he justify it? What does Athêna say to persuade him against it?

### What form does Athêna take when she persuades Hector to stop running? Why is this especially jarring? We tend to think of Athena in terms of a nice, caring type. She is very, very dangerous indeed.

### What does Hector beg Achilles to do? Why is this request important?

### What does Hector say about Achilles heart, and what does he warn Achilles? Another excellent question. Think of it in terms of wartime crimes. Atrocities are committed even today. Does war completely blind?

23

1. What do the Achaeans do before they sit down to eat? What does Achilles promise the dead Patroclus?

### What does Patroclus’ ghost ask of Achilles? Why is the ghost unhappy? Where does it want to be buried?

1. Which gods keep Hector whole, and what do they do? Is there a hermeneutic meaning here? If so, what is it? If not, why?

### How is the race like a battle scene? How is it different? We coaches often lose sight of the difference.

### To whom does Achilles award the prize for the last competition? Why is this significant?

24

### What does Achilles do every night for eleven nights? What does he do every dawn? Notice the epic symmetry with the peace contract at the very end

### What are the gods who side with the Trojans urging Hermês to do?

### How does Priam react to the crowd of Trojan townspeople? How does he speak to his sons?

### How does Achilles react to Priam’s speech? Why is his reaction important?

### What does Achilles say about fortune? How are his father and Priam alike? What does he tell Priam to expect?

### What other courtesy does Achilles grant Priam? Why does he take Priam’s right hand?