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### Theme of Love in *The Iliad*

*The Iliad* is a part of the Epic Cycle that includes poems and stories explaining the Trojan War right from its cause to the return of Greek soldiers to their homeland. Although the story primarily reveals the ideas of heroism and how the heroic characters shaped history during their time, the theme of love can also be traced in the epic. In *The Iliad*, love takes different forms: from becoming a reason for war, violence, and hatred to being a root of caring parental relationships, close friendship, and deep affection between a man and a woman.

At the beginning of the epic, love becomes the reason for the Trojan War, violence, and hatred among the main characters. For instance, *The Iliad* explains the story of Achilles, whose parents' wedding started the war when Eris threw the apple of discord (Finkelberg 10). Parental love also became the reason for war because Agamemnon took Chryses' daughter as a war prize thus making the father seek divine intervention: "Pay the Danaans back - your arrows for my tears!" (Homer 76). Having its roots in love, nine years of war caused a lot of violence because Greeks were battling with their enemies as well amongst themselves. In addition, Achilles' feelings toward Briseis caused hatred between him and Agamemnon when the warrior demanded her instead of Chryses' daughter, although the woman was Achilles' war prize. Driven by hostility towards Agamemnon and the desire for revenge, the hero withdrew from the war and asked his mother to seek divine intervention in favor of the Trojans. Thus, the epic demonstrates

that love may have a ruining force that leads to war conflicts, violence between nations, and hatred among people.

On the contrary, the theme of love can be viewed positively in *The Iliad* through parental love, friendship, and the relationship between a man and a woman. For instance, caring relationships between a mother and a son are depicted through the interaction of Thetis and Achilles. The mother always protected her son in the battles against his enemies and helped the hero to emerge victorious (Lang 150). In addition, Achilles felt pain after the death of Patroclus that proves his deep attachment to the friend. Achilles kept on grieving for his friend, and while talking to his mother, he expressed his sadness by saying that he had lost the will to live (Currie 331). Furthermore, a romantic relationship between a man and a woman is depicted through the love between Hector and Andromache. The man is trying to cheer up his wife even though he knows the battle can be fatal: “Poor Andromache! Why does your heart sorrow so much for me?” (Homer 212). Thus, the epic shows that there is a strong attachment and true love among family members and friends that help the heroes to overcome hardships on their way.

To conclude, *The Iliad* proves that love is the motivation of the characters’ actions and emotions. For instance, the feeling is the reason for war, violence, and hatred at the beginning of the poem. With the flow of the plot, the readers understand that kind relationships within families and among friends motivate the heroes to protect their loved ones, fight for their freedom, and revenge for their deaths. Thus, love brings out heroic ideals that were of substantial importance to the warriors of the time.

Works Cited

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