This article is a study of the only four significant female characters in the *Iliad* (Helen, Andromache, Hecabe and Briseis) and their relationship with the male characters. It will demonstrate that despite the tremendous differences between them, Homer treated them all in the same manner. He emphasized how intense and deep were their emotions and sentiments and how little regard the male characters had for these emotions and sentiments. Thus he impresses on his audience their desperate helplessness and utter inability to determine the course of events, including their own lives. In this way they are all extremely tragic figures.

The Greek camp provided only a limited scope for presenting female characters. But Homer made full use of the scenes in Troy for this purpose. In fact, women play a very important role in every scene that takes place in Troy.

The first woman to come into prominence in the *Iliad* is Helen. She is mentioned...
in book II (161 and 177) as the cause of the war. In book III she becomes the main subject. A duel is arranged between Paris and Menelaus and “whoever is victorious . . . let him take the woman and all the possessions and bring them home” (71-72, and 92-93). Here and in the other places in book III where the purpose of the duel is mentioned (255, 282, 285 and 458), Helen’s own feelings are completely ignored. She is treated like an object. In fact, in each case she is lumped together with the possessions that came with her from Sparta to Troy. When the scene shifts to Helen, Homer again emphasizes the passive role she is forced to play. While Paris and Menelaus are deciding her future she is inside weaving. She is pre-occupied with the war, but the only way that she can express her interest is by weaving pictures of it. Iris tells her to come to the wall so that she may see whose wife she will be.

Then, after impressing on his audience how little Helen’s emotions are taken into consideration, Homer reveals how real those emotions are: “... the goddess put sweet longing into her heart for her previous husband and city and parents . . . and she hastened from her room shedding a round tear” (139-142). The first time she speaks we can again see the depths of her feelings, which are so completely ignored by the men who are determining her future: “Would that evil death had been my pleasure when I followed your son here, leaving my chamber, relatives, grown daughter and my lovely companions” (173-175). As Tronquart observes “cet adjectif ἑρατείνη—qui est de la même famille qu’ ἑρος—signifiant qu’elle a encore en elle de sa naïveté de jeune fille qui déplaçait jadis sur ses compagnes les premiers sentiments d’amour . . .” Not only does Helen feel strong regret and homesickness, but also shame. When she does not see her brothers, she assumes that she has brought such disgrace on them that they are ashamed to show themselves. Then, in order to show how completely cut off Helen is from even the most basic knowledge about her family, Homer remarks that her brothers are dead in Sparta (243-244). She also feels intense guilt. She calls herself hateful (404) and then says that it would be blameworthy to go to bed with Paris (410-411). Later, in book VI, line 344, she refers to herself as a “dog, nasty contriver of evil”. She goes on to wish that she had died at birth and then again describes herself as a dog (356). In her only other speech (XXIV, 762-775) she again says that she wishes that she had died before she came to Troy (764). Indeed, in a society that has accurately been described as a shame culture, Helen seems to be the only person with what we would call a

5. The allusions to Helen being raped in II, 356 and 590 and III, 444 are completely incompatible with everything that Helen says about her own condition and what is said to her. I think that the best explanation for their presence is that Homer has been careless. He has allowed into his narrative a few lines that are inconsistent with his consciously devised story. It is probable that these lines exist either because of an earlier version of the story (as argued by Kakridis, above, note 1, pp. 28-31) or because they are typical of the situation (as argued by M. Willcock, “B 356, Z 326 and A 404”, Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society N.S. 4, 1956/7, pp. 23-26).
6. Above, note 1, p. 33.
guilty conscience. However, despite the intensity and depths of her sensitivity she is treated as an object by the men who control the course of events.

As for the scene on the wall itself, Kakridis offers the interesting theory that it is adapted from the standard motif of a woman being present at a duel where she is the prize and so that she must be visible. If this is true, then the change that Homer introduces is very significant. As Kakridis says: "The figure of the young girl who . . . is visible to the contestants is replaced in Homer by the woman who now watches the rivals without being visible to them . . . the motif takes on a new and deeper meaning; the poet is now interested not in the reaction of the two men but in how the woman will react psychologically . . ." But, as always in the Iliad, a woman's psychological state, which is so interesting to Homer, is irrelevant to the men who are determining her future. Kakridis himself observes that in some passages Helen is a "beautiful, lifeless doll" and in others a deeply feeling person. He attributes this difference to stages in the development of the myth: "When in the Iliad the heroine is presented as a lifeless object of transaction between men . . . we know that we have to do with elements borrowed from older versions of the myth." He does not realize that the extreme pathos of Helen's situation is created by exactly the fact that a deeply feeling person is treated like a lifeless object.

The pathetic and agonizing nature of Helen's situation is brought out very strongly in the conversations that she has with Aphrodite and Paris at the end of book III.

Unfortunately, in trying to understand the Aphrodite scene the problem arises that it is very difficult to form a clear conception of the gods in the Iliad. They function very differently in different passages, and everywhere they are fundamentally different from the Christian conception of divinity. As for Aphrodite, Hermann Fränkel observed that the greater gods, such as Athena and Apollo function as independent personalities but the lesser divinities such as Hephaestus and Aphrodite are closely associated with their specific functions. The word Aphrodite is actually used in Odyssey 22, 444 simply to mean physical love. In Iliad XIV 198–199, Hera says to Aphrodite, "give to me the love and desire with which you overpower all immortals and mortal men." When

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7. George Ryan ("Helen in Homer", C.J. 61, 1965-66, pp. 115-117) asserts that Helen is dishonest and deceitful. He offers no evidence for this view, nor can I see any, especially in view of Homer's own statements such as III, 139-142. The theory of H. W. Stoll ("Helena", Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, ed. by W. Roscher, Leipzig, 1890, I, 2, p. 1928) and Tronquart (above, note 1, pp. 29-30) that Helen does not feel regret because she has done wrong but because her present situation is so unpleasant, seems to me to be contradicted by the intensity and meaning of what she says.
8. Of course, Priam treats her like a human being, but his situation is like that of the women. He must wait and watch while the young men control what is happening.
9. Above, note 1, p. 36.
10. Ibid., pp. 28-31.
Aphrodite tries to participate in battle, she is completely ineffectual, and is told categorically to stay in her own sphere of activity (V, 348–349). The human whom she loves and protects is unmarital, erotic Paris, to whom she had given fulfilment of lust (μακριλοσύνη) (XXIV, 30). That “fulfilment of lust” is, of course, Helen herself, whom Aphrodite says she loves intensely (III, 415). So Aphrodite here is closely connected with Helen’s own sexuality. In fact, I think that in a very definite way Helen is here arguing with the sexual force that attracts her to Paris and the sexual nature of her own character. Wolfgang Kullmann has analyzed this very perceptively:

“Helena hat ihren einstigen Mann wiedergesehen und ist von Sehnsucht nach ihm erfüllt. Sie wehrt sich gegen diese Stimme gegen eine Verführung. Aber die Göttin Aphrodite lässt sich nicht abweisen. Sie ist hier ... eine elementar wirkende Kraft.

Man hat gesagt, dass erst bei den Lyrikern ... die Liebe als Problem 'entdeckt' worden sei. Es ist jedoch die Frage ... ob sich nicht die verschiedene Weise, wie von Liebe gesprochen wird, aus einer Verschiedenheit der literarischen Gattungen des Epos einerseits und der Elegie, des Jambos und des Liedes anderseits erklären. Ist es nicht dieselbe Grundhaltung, wenn Sappho sich vom 'Eros' verfolgt glaubt: 'Eros the looser of limbs spins me around again, Eros a bitter-sweet, unconquerable snake' (fr 137D) und wenn in epischer Situation Helena von Aphrodite gedrängt wird, zu Alexandros zu gehen? ... Und wenn es nun schon spezifisch lyrisch ist, in der ersten Person von sich selbst zu sprechen, so lässt doch der objektivere, reflektiertere Bericht in der dritten Person der Erzählung gewiss nicht auf ein geringeres Verständnis der Problematik des Eros schliessen.”

12. XIV, 25–30 were deleted by Aristarchus because Homer nowhere else shows a knowledge of the judgement of Paris. But I think that this objection has been competently answered by K. Reinhardt (Das Parisurteil, Frankfurt, 1938). Reinhardt’s arguments have recently been reproduced in a condensed form by P. Walcot (“The Judgement of Paris”, G. & R. 2s XXIV, 1, 1977, pp. 31–39).

13. Hermann Frankel (Review of Walter Marg’s Der Charakter in der Sprache der frühgriechischen Dichtung. A.J.P. 60, 1939, pp. 476–477) observes that when Paris says to Hector (III, 65) “not to be thrown away are the glorious gifts of the gods”, referring especially to Aphrodite (III, 64), he is talking about his own erotic character, which he contrasts with Hector’s hard, purposeful nature (III, 60–63). The major difference between Paris and Helen is that he accepts his erotic nature without a qualm, whereas she struggles desperately against hers.

14. Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias, Berlin, 1956, pp. 114–115. An alternative interpretation of Aphrodite is Cedric Whitman’s (Homer and the Heroic Tradition, N.Y., 1958, p. 224): “Though Helen yields and goes to Paris, she does not go out of love, but out of the fear of her present position. If Helen’s will is overborne, it is not overcome by the simple, unequivocal symbol of Aphrodite, as equal to sex. The goddess is used as a sounding board for all the emotions which rise out of Helen’s complex knot of circumstances. Her reproof and even insult to Aphrodite is precisely analogous to her continued self condemnation ... Aphrodite is the predicative image of all Helen’s deeds, attitudes, and circumstances ... But to say that Helen does not go to Paris out of love is perverse when she is being led to him by Aphrodite. It is true that Aphrodite “is used as a sounding board for all the emotions ...” However, that is because these emotions and considerations appear in the struggle they wage against the sexuality of her character and her attachment for Paris.

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So, in a certain way Aphrodite personifies Helen's sexuality, and Helen is saying in sarcastic disgust to her own erotic impulses: now that you have already carried me away to Troy, maybe you will take me to an even more distant place (III, 400–402). However, she then realizes how dangerous it is to be irreverent and defiant towards her attachment to Paris, since that is all that she has. But the question remains: Why is Aphrodite used to personify Helen's sexuality? There are two main reasons. First, Homer always used gods to initiate actions, even when they were not needed. 15 Second, Homer could not express divided feelings and internal conflict in a person's personality. 16 He would represent an internal conflict either as a division between the person and an internal organ or between the person and a god who personified the emotional drive against which he was fighting. 17 If we accept E. R. Dodds' analysis, then this was especially true if the impulse was non-rational and resulted in acts that caused acute shame to their author. This was because to people in Homer "character is knowledge, what is not knowledge is not part of character, but comes to a man from outside." 18 Another factor to be considered is that the gods have a tendency to be less moral than humans. 19 This is certainly true of Aphrodite in this passage. She has no use for the qualms that Helen expresses in lines 410–412. So it is possible to see in this passage a conflict between Helen's rational, moral (or at least shame-avoiding) personality and her sexuality, which is irrational, amoral and shameless. It is her rational, honourable self that loses because she is so dependent on her sexuality and her relationship with Paris. She is in such a dependent position because she is a woman and consequently has nearly no scope to act effectively and is treated like an object. 20 No man in 

15. Indeed, even when reference to their intervention is inconsistent with what happens (see Fränkel, above, note II, p. 64).
16. Bruno Snell, The Discovery of The Mind, trans. by T. Rosenmeyer, 1953; N.Y. 1960, p. 19 (as modified by Kullmann, above). Snell would also maintain (pp. 20 and 31) that divine intervention is necessary because Homeric characters are incapable of making decisions. But this is effectively countered by the arguments of E. Harrison ("Notes on Homeric Psychology", Phoenix 14, 1960, pp. 79–80).
19. That they are no better than humans was noted in antiquity by Xenophanes and Plato. Among modern scholars who have observed that gods tend to be morally inferior are Hermann Fränkel (above, note II, pp. 54–56; 63–64); William Greene (Moirà, 1944; N.Y. 1963, pp. 11–12); G. M. A. Grube ("The Gods in Homer". Phoenix, 5, 1951, pp. 62–78) discusses this phenomenon in detail and tries to explain it; E. T. Owen (The Story of the Iliad, London, 1947, p. 53); and W. Schmid and O. Stühlin (Geschichte der grieschischen Literatur I, 1, 1929; Munich, 1965, p. 112). P. Chantreine ("Le divin et les dieux chez Homère", Entrevistes sur l'Antiquite Classique I, Geneva, 1952, pp. 74–76) lists the instances of Zeus acting as a guardian of morality in the Iliad. It is not a very impressive list. Furthermore, even if it could be shown that Zeus is extensively concerned with justice in the Iliad, as Hugh-Lloyd-Jones tries to do (The Justice of Zeus, Berkeley, 1971, pp. 1–27) still, as he himself says, Zeus "is in a different position from that of all the others (gods) with regard to justice" (p. 4). And I think it very questionable that Lloyd-Jones has proved his point even for Zeus, although I would certainly agree with him that the human beings in the Iliad live by a definite moral code which includes the "co-operative virtues".
20. Aphrodite finds Helen on the wall with the other women (III, 383–384). From there they have been watching Paris and Menelaus determine their fate.
the *Iliad* is left with only his irrational nature to protect and support him. For this reason no man in the *Iliad* is forced by his circumstances to act in a manner that is contrary to his rational, honourable impulses.

However, the gods in Homer are very complex and here Aphrodite is more than simply a personification of Helen's sexuality. She is also an objectively existing superhuman conversing with Helen.\(^21\) Lines 406-409 and 415-417 would make little sense if she were not. The question of the relationship between human freedom and divine compulsion is a complicated one. A very helpful observation is that made by Lesky on the contradiction between Priam's statement that the gods, not Helen, are responsible for the war (III, 164) and Helen's assumption of complete responsibility (III, 173-175): "(Helen) vertritt den einen der möglichen Aspekte in derselben Isolierung wie Priamos den anderen ... Aus diesem Wechsel der Aspekte—das Bild von dem Vorzeigen der zwei Seiten ein und derselben Münze drängt sich auf ..."\(^22\) But despite the fact that divine intervention usually does not exclude human responsibility, one aspect of the Aphrodite-Helen episode is Helen being overwhelmed by an irresistible force. For although Aphrodite says that she has loved Helen, her real protégé is Paris, as Helen herself says (III, 406-409). For Paris' benefit Aphrodite functions not only as the personification of sexuality but as a superperson flying through the air. Functioning in this way she has just saved Paris from the battle-field and now brings Helen to him. After all, Helen is the fulfillment of lust (μαχαλοσύνη, XXIV, 30) which she gave to Paris.\(^23\) Helen's own wishes are not considered. So Aphrodite acts like the human characters. She ignores Helen's feelings and treats her as if she were an object.\(^24\)

When Helen meets Paris, she repeats the same pattern of behaviour as she presented in her encounter with Aphrodite. At first she expresses scorn and hatred for him and says she wishes Menelaus had killed him (III, 428-429). Then she tells him to challenge Menelaus again (III, 432-433). But she immediately

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22. Above, note 1, p. 40. On p. 39 Lesky points out that Helen adopts both attitudes of personal and divine responsibility in one speech (VI, 344-358). It is interesting to note how this reciprocity, like so much of ancient Greek traditional thought, fell apart in Euripides' hands, in the dialogue between Hecabe and Helen in the *Trojan Women*.

23. Aphrodite's irresistible power is emphasized in line 420 where, when she leads Helen to Paris, she is called εαίνυ. This is the only time in Homer that that word is used for an identified god. As Chantraine observes (above, note 19, p. 51) it "souligne la puissance mystérieuse de la divinité".

24. Von Scheliha sums up the situation very well (above, note 1, p. 98): "In keinem anderen Augenblick konnte die Unterwerfung Helens unter den Willen der Aphrodite so eindrückend geschildert werden wie hier, wo sie, den früheren Gemahl soeben in ruhmvollstem Kampf erblickend, ihre Bewunderung und ihre Liebe erneut ihm zuwendet und dennoch Paris, der in dem gleichen Kampf kläglich unterlag, mit ihrer Liebe beglückt, gegen ihr eigenes besseres Wollen, von der Göttin überwältigt." Another perceptive analysis is by Ghiano (above, note 1, pp. 181-182): "Las quejas se originan en el orgullo mancillado, su persona regia hecha juguete divino ... impulsada por fuerzas superiores se desliga de lo afectivo y se deja conducir, más o menos pasivamente".
changes her mind and asks him not to go lest he be defeated (III, 433-666).\textsuperscript{25} Just as in the Aphrodite episode, she has realized that no matter how much she despises Paris and is ashamed of her affair with him, her sexual attachment to him is all that she has. Paris, as is usual with men in the \textit{Iliad}, does not take her mental turmoil seriously. He thinks only of his desire for her (III, 441-446). He leads and she follows passively to bed (III, 447).\textsuperscript{26}

We next meet Helen in book VI when she encounters Hector. The description of Hector’s entry into Troy shows again how the women must wait anxiously to find out about the men, who determine the course of events (VI, 238-240): “Around him came the wives and daughters of the Trojans on a run asking about their children, brothers, friends and husbands.” When Helen talks to Hector she again expresses her regret and guilt about what she has done (VI, 344-358). But just as in book III, her feelings are completely ignored when the men consider her future in book VII. Antenor, as is normal, couples her with the possessions that came with her from Sparta (350). Paris replies that he is willing to return the possessions but not Helen (362-364). This is the only passage in the \textit{Iliad} in which the cause of the war is considered where Helen is separated from her possessions. However, Paris does not refuse to return Helen out of consideration for her as a human being. He does not argue that she does not want to go or that she may be killed by the Greeks. Indeed, he does not give any reason. But we saw in book III that he valued Helen very highly as a sexual object. So the logical conclusion is that he values Helen much more than the other possessions because he derives more pleasure from her. This would be an especially crucial consideration for someone as highly erotic as Paris.\textsuperscript{27} Another indication that Paris did not treat her as a human being is in her last speech (XXIV, 762-775), where she says that only Hector and Priam were kind and helpful to her.

The last time that Helen speaks is at the end of book XXIV. In fact, Homer has chosen to give her the last significant speech in the \textit{Iliad}, and that is a speech of such poignancy and pathos that it must leave a lasting impression on the audience.\textsuperscript{28} At the beginning she again expresses her guilt and regret over what she has done (764), and then talks about what a wonderful friend Hector was to her. It is fitting that besides the old man Priam, Hector was her protector

\textsuperscript{25} F. J. Groten Jr. (above, note I, p. 37) asserts that Helen is being sarcastic here. But he offers no evidence for this interpretation, nor can I see any; especially since her change of mind is psychologically very understandable and parallels her initial resistance and subsequent subservience to Aphrodite, who in a way personifies her love for Paris. The fact that Helen urges him to fight in VI 337-338 is irrelevant. In a normal battle Paris as an archer would be fairly safe, not so in a single combat with Menelaus.

\textsuperscript{26} Kenneth Reckford (above, note I, p. 19) observes about line 426 (“There sat Helen, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus”): “The shamelessness of Aphrodite, the domination of passion and the driving force of fate, are all magnificently symbolized ... when the goddess draws up a chair for the mortal woman. In a final line of submission (426) the non-particular epithet seems effortlessly to point the tragic contrast between the semi-divinity of Helen and her human weakness.”

\textsuperscript{27} Another indication of Paris’ reluctance to give up Helen is XI, 125.

\textsuperscript{28} Priam’s instructions which follow are immediately forgotten.
since he differs from the other warriors in that his life is centred around his home, and his virtues are more domestic than military. However, although the ostensible purpose of Helen’s speech is to discuss Hector, it is really more important for the light it sheds on her and her own situation. Indeed, it completes our understanding of her. It is one of the surest proofs of Homer’s instinct for interesting characters that he saw the potentialities of Helen: a person hopelessly trapped by a thoughtless act she committed many years before, completely cut off from her home and family not only by physical barriers but by the shame of what she has done; living among strangers who hate her and who she knows have a right to hate her because of the damage she has caused them. All these are qualities that are unique to her situation. But her position is aggravated by the fact that, like the other women, she must watch and wait passively while the men determine the course of events. This agonizing condition is emphasized by Homer.

The second most prominent woman in the Iliad is Andromache. The first information that we receive about Andromache is that she has heard that the Trojans were doing badly and so she has gone to the wall like a mad woman (VI, 386–389). Like all the other woman in the Iliad all she can do is watch to see what will happen. When Hector approaches, Andromache runs to him (394). She is described as “daughter of great hearted Eetion” (395). Then Homer devotes the next two lines to Eetion. John Zarker in an interesting article maintains that there was an earlier epic about Achilles’ sack of Thebe (Eetion’s city) and Lynnessos, and that Homer assumed that his audience was familiar with this epic. He points out that Chryseis is said to come from “Thebe the holy city of Eetion” (I, 366–369) and Briseis is said to come from Lynnessos, whose destruction is linked closely with that of Thebe (II, 690–691); that in XIX, 290–296 Briseis’ experience parallels Andromache’s past tragedy and future loss of Hector, and that in XXII, 477–481 Andromache herself equates Thebe and Troy, so “What happened to Thebe and the other cities of the Troad will happen to Troy. What happened to Chryseis, Briseis and other captive women will happen to Andromache.” It is not necessary to accept the hypothesis of a previous epic for the rest of Zarker’s observations to be valid. All these points serve to link the various women of the Iliad together and to create the impression of the insecurity of their lives and the tremendous loss and suffering they must undergo.

The first thing that Andromache says is that she is utterly dependent on Hector, that it would be better for her to die if she lost him (410–411). Then she explains why. She has no other comfort besides him since her whole family has been killed (411–428). So Hector is her entire family (429–430). She then begs him to stay within the walls (431–432). Wolfgang Schadewaldt commented


that Andromache is no Heldenweib like many women in the German sagas and many Spartan wives and mothers. 31 This is an interesting point. Women warriors like the Amazons or Vergil’s Camilla would have been out of place in the Iliad’s realistic battle narratives. However, nothing prevented the wife of the leading Trojan warrior from being proud of his martial exploits and encouraging him to avenge the horrible losses that she has suffered at the hands of the Greek invaders. Indeed, that is what we might expect. But that is not what Homer wanted. He formed all his women to display the agonies of war. It is natural for women to have little influence in war, but Homer contrived for his women to be constantly frustrated also in their dealings with their men. He constantly emphasizes how deep and intense their feelings are and then shows how ineffective they are in getting their men to take their feelings into consideration.

Then Andromache gives Hector some military advice (433–439). As might be expected, it is defensive in nature, yet Aristarchus and many modern editors have considered this passage an interpolation because any type of military advice is unfitting for a woman. 32 Charles Beye shows this male chauvinism in a different form. He says, “Andromache shows a woman’s typical determination to direct her husband on matters she does not understand.” 33 However, this advice is obviously well thought out and, as far as we can determine, sensible. It is impressive that Andromache, despite her emotional horror of the war, can still think about it in a calm and intelligent manner. But Hector’s reaction is the same as Beye’s. In his first speech (441–465) he takes seriously her appeal that he pity her and Astyanax and stay within the walls. After all, that is the type of request one might consider natural for a woman. However, he does not even take her military advice seriously enough to try to refute it. In his second speech he simply dismisses it categorically: “But go into the house and take care of your

32. Discussed by A. Roemer (Aristarchos Athetesen in der Homerkritik, Leipzig, 1912, p. 417). Among more modern editors who bracket these lines are Dindorff, and Améris and Hentze. It is true that Aristarchus adds two more reasons for athetizing these lines. One is that they are not true: the wall does not provide a good entrance there nor is the enemy close to the wall. The second is that Hector only answers the previous part of her speech. The first objection is based on the patently incorrect assumption that Homer provides a complete, panoramic view of the war. The fact is that Andromache’s advice is obviously carefully considered and, in fact, seems to be close to a defensive policy that Hector once followed (IX, 353–354; which is another example of military information that had not been mentioned previously). As for the second objection, Hector does not answer Andromache’s military advice because he does not take it seriously. This is established in lines 490–492, which really are an answer to 433–439. But much more important is the fact that Aristarchus adds these two considerations as afterthoughts introduced by Καί. It is typical for him to append added reasons to his main reason. His real reason for athetizing these lines is that they are not fitting (άνικετόν) for Andromache because (υδ’π) she rivals Hector at generalship (άντιτροπήσει).
33. Above, note 2, p. 150. However, in his more recent article (above, note 1, p. 99) Beye completely reverses himself and states that Andromache’s “attempt to advise Hector on strategy (and very intelligently indeed) is met with the reply . . . which is a gentle, conmmial version of Odysseus’ stroke on Thersites' back.” In fact I found this article by Beye to be very good on bringing out the dependence and passivity of women in the Iliad.
own work, the loom and the distaff, and bid your servants to go about their work. But war will be the concern of the men" (490–492). Marylin Arthur argues that this passage marks an advance in attitudes towards women, since it focuses “almost exclusively on the positive side of the position of women; it emphasizes women's inclusion in the society as a whole, rather than her exclusion from certain roles; it celebrates the importance of the functions that women do perform.”

She says that it is fitting that Hector should be the one to express such a progressive attitude since he differs from the other heroes in that his domestic life is at least as important to him as his military activities. However, the actual situation is clearly the reverse. It is that even Hector, who is by far the most gentle, loving and, by the standards of his contemporaries, the most uxorious male character in the Iliad, cannot take his wife completely seriously as a human being. He is moved by his wife's concern, sympathizes with her, tells her how much he loves her and explains that worrying is of no use since what is fated to happen will happen. However, he does not deign even to answer her carefully considered military advice, but simply tells her to stick to her proper female chores and concerns. She must not try to influence in any way the course of the war, despite the fact that that war has so greatly changed her life and will again in the future.

Before Andromache appears again in book XXII, she is mentioned twice. One reference (VIII, 187–189) mentions her faithful performance of her domestic duties. The other (XVII, 207–208) refers to her imminent loss of her husband. This is indeed her tragedy and that of all the other women in the Iliad, that amidst horrible losses and suffering, all they can do is perform their domestic chores. When Andromache does re-enter the narrative we can see fully what Hector's division between male and female roles in VI, 490–492 means.

34. “The Origins of the Western Attitude Toward Women”, Arethusa, VI, 1973, pp. 11–14. She also states (p. 13) “nowhere do we encounter the expressions of misogyny which appear so frequently in later Greek literature”. This is simply not true. In XIX, 97 Agamemnon says that Hera “although a woman” tricked Zeus. But from the stories about the gods in the Iliad there is no reason to be surprised that Hera or any other female divinity could trick Zeus or any other male divinity. The surprise at this is caused by the sexist prejudices of Agamemnon and his audience. Also in XX, 251–252, Aeneas says to Achilles, “Why is it necessary for us to squabble and bandy insults at each other like women”. This shows a negative stereotype about women, which has survived to our own day. But Homer does not share his characters' prejudices.

35. As far as what was regarded as the proper role for women in the Iliad, Werner Jaeger (Paideia, 2, ed., trans. by Gilbert Highet, 1945; N.Y. 1965, Vol. I, p. 22) and Juan Ghiano (above, note 1, p. 181), who follows Jaeger very closely in his discussion of this, state that the real ἀγαθή of women is beauty. But this is misleading. Female beauty was not more highly regarded in the Iliad than in most other societies, including our own. Even the glamorous Helen seems to have spent most of her time engaged in the same type of humdrum activities as any other aristocratic housewife: weaving (III, 125–128) and supervising servants (III, 421–422; and VI, 323–324). As for normal war captives, both Jaeger (p. 24) and Ghiano (p. 189) admit that they are prized not only for beauty but also for expertise at domestic chores (I, 31 and 115). Furthermore attractive appearance was also considered to be a significant male characteristic. Thersites (II, 217–219) and Dolon (X, 316) are ugly, but Achilles is the most handsome Greek (II, 673–674). (See Walter Donlan, “The Origin of κολύς κ'αγαθός”, A.J.P., 94, 1973, pp. 369–370). Moreover, as Arthur Adkins (Merit and Responsibility, London, 1960, pp. 36–37) points out, chastity is also an attribute of female ἀγαθή. In fact, ἀγαθή would be an odd word to apply to a purely physical quality like beauty.
While Hector has been killed in front of the walls of Troy, Andromache is in the innermost part of their home weaving and instructing her servants to prepare a bath for him (XXII, 440-444). Homer emphasizes her ignorance and the degree to which she is cut off from the event which is of ultimate importance to her (445-446). We come to Andromache after two short laments and expect a third. Instead, this expectation is frustrated for forty lines. Even when she hears the crying from the wall and realizes that something must have happened to Hector, she guesses incorrectly as to what it is (455-456).

This passage (XXII, 437-514) also emphasizes what she had said in her first speech in book VI: that she is completely dependent on Hector for meaning in her life. It is significant that, as Charles Segal noted, during this entire section her name is never used, she is always referred to as “Hector’s wife”, thus emphasizing how completely her identity is defined by that status. Most of her speech concerns her orphaned son. The striking point is how ineffectual she will be to protect him, how the father is the only parent who can guarantee a child’s social acceptance. So her dependence on Hector is caused not only by her own personal background and feelings but also by the fact that in her culture women in general simply could not function in civil life without men. This is a direct result of the division of roles supported by Hector himself. Another result of this division of roles and consequent dependence of women is that now that Hector is dead even her domestic activities no longer have any meaning (512-513).

Also in this passage Homer contrives to mention Eetion twice (472 and 480), thus reminding his audience of the horrible losses Andromache has already suffered.

Andromache’s last speech in the Iliad is XXIV, 725-745. In it she shows how far from a Heldeweb she is. She regrets Hector’s military accomplishments since they will give the Greeks more reason to hate her son, and ends by saying how sad it was that Hector died on the battlefield not at home.

Before proceeding to discuss Hecabe and Briseis, I would like to make one point about Andromache and Helen considered together, since they are by far the most prominent women in the Iliad. It has often been observed that in many ways Helen and her relationship with Paris are the opposite of Andromache and her relationship with Hector. The differences were expressed succinctly by Cedric Whitman: “the scene of Hector and Andromache, the truly married pair, inverts the picture of the wanton lovers, Paris and Helen, both in the obvious matters of devotion versus lust, and even in some of the details of what they say to each other. Helen rebukes Paris for his lack of valour and wishes he were dead; Andromache fears above everything harm for her husband, and rebukes him for being too reckless. Helen despises Paris for his lack of shame; Hector

36. This was pointed out by Charles Segal, “Andromache’s Anagnorisis: Formulaic Artistry in Iliad 22. 437-476”, H.S.C.P., 75, 1971, p. 36.
37. Ibid., p. 37.
would be ashamed not to defend his city."

Juan Ghiano adds the further difference that whereas for Helen Troy is merely an episode, for Andromache it is her whole life. She will leave it as a slave.

However, despite these differences, the two women’s situations are basically similar. It is true that the nature of Helen’s attachment to Paris is different from Andromache’s to Hector, but it is just as strong. It is true that she says that she wishes Paris were dead, but then she changes her mind and asks him not to return to the battlefield; just as earlier she had first resisted Aphrodite and then yielded to her. Helen and Andromache are so completely dependent on their men because the war has cut them off from their previous loved ones and also because they, like all women in the *Iliad*, have no scope for effective action. They both must go to the wall to see their future determined. It is true that Helen is bothered by Paris’ lack of valour and sense of honour while Hector is too honourable and courageous for Andromache. However, for the women concerned the results are the same. Both women are completely frustrated in their attempt to shape their men’s actions and behaviour. As for Ghiano’s observation, it is only partially true. We know from the *Odyssey* that Helen goes back to a comfortable life in Sparta, but there is no hint of that in the *Iliad*. Troy’s imminent destruction is mentioned several times in the *Iliad*; but it is usually connected with Andromache’s future misery, or that of the Trojan women in general (e.g. IV, 238–239; VI, 309–310), never with Helen’s reunion with Menelaus, which she claims to want. As for their pasts, Helen’s past was pleasant and Andromache’s tragic. However, they are both severed from their past and so completely dependent on their men. Moreover, the pleasantness of Helen’s past is as much a torture to her as Andromache’s miserable past is to her. So Homer created these women to be very different, yet nearly all the aspects of their characters contribute to their pathos and misery.

The next woman whom I will discuss is Hecabe. She first speaks in VI, 254–262. As is usual for women in the *Iliad*, her attempt to influence a man’s actions is ineffectual. Her next request is to Athene (305–311). It also is rejected. The next time Hecabe appears is in book XXII. She is on the wall, that same wall where Helen and Andromache had their most poignant experiences. Like Helen and Andromache she is watching the battlefield, a helpless spectator of an activity that is fundamentally important to her. She pleads with Hector (82–89), but does not persuade him. After he is killed, she shows that she, like Andromache, has been completely dependent on him for meaning in her life: "How shall I, suffering terribly, live now that you are dead? You who were my boast night and day . . ." (431–433).

Hecabe re-enters the action in book XXIV. Before Priam leaves to go to Achilles he calls Hecabe to him to ask her opinion. This is odd because Hecabe answers that he should not go, and she expresses herself in the most categorical,

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38. Above, note 14, p. 267; also E. T. Owen, above, note 19, p. 64.
39. Above, note 1, p. 186.
vehement terms imaginable (201-216); but her speech does not have the slightest effect on him. He begins his answer with the words, “Do not try to restrain me desiring to go ... You will not persuade me”. He ends by stating that he does not care if Achilles murders him once he has held Hector in his arms. So the question arises: Why did he ask Hecabe’s advice in the first place? The only effective argument against his going was that Achilles might kill him. But that does not bother him. One purpose for including this conversation between Priam and Hecabe might be that it shows Priam’s resolution. However, it demonstrates even more effectively Hecabe’s complete inability to sway Priam in any way. Later she does get him to offer a libation to Zeus and ask for an omen (283-301), but that has no effect on the course of events.

The last woman whose condition I will analyze is Briseis. She is a war captive and so displays in the most radical form the tragic situation of women in the *Iliad*. Female war captives are treated virtually as inanimate objects. This can best be seen in the prizes given for the contests in book XXIII. In lines 259–261 the prizes in general are mentioned: “cauldrons and tripods and horses and mules and strong oxen and well-girdled women and grey iron.” Most striking of the prizes for specific contests are those for wrestling: “for the winner a great tripod for a fire which the Greeks valued at twelve oxen. For the loser he put in the middle a woman who was skilled at much handiwork, whom the Greeks valued at 4 oxen” (702-705). Briseis is sometimes simply one among such female objects (IX, 128–132; XIX, 243–247). In his argument with Agamemnon in book I, Achilles never mentions any emotion he might feel for Briseis. Instead, he regards her as part of quantifiable rewards for his service (163, 167). Nor does Agamemnon take her because he is particularly attracted to her. He is resolved to take a γέρας to make up for the one he lost because it would be unseemly that he alone be without (118–119), and he does not care whose γέρας he takes (138). He takes Briseis in order to teach Achilles a lesson (184–187). After Briseis is taken, she is important to Achilles solely as she affects his τμή (e.g. I, 244, 353, 356, 412, 507). Indeed, not only did these Greek warriors not consider women to be significant human beings, they were not even particularly attracted to them as sex objects. As a scholiast explains (ad IX, 132), Agamemnon never has sexual relations with Briseis because he took her through pride not out of lust (διὰ φιλοτιμίαν, οὖν ἄκρασιάς ἔνεκα). It is interesting to note in this context that Nestor’s reason why they should have sex with the Trojan women is to avenge Helen (II, 355–356). In fact, the Greek warriors are so little interested in sex that Gilbert Murray could trace their attitude to a residue of a vow of abstinence from sex that was once part of the story.40

40. Above, note 3, pp. 132-133. Murray is forced to explain away several exceptions and does not mention XXIV, 129–131 and 676. Actually the Greek warriors had little concern for sex because they treated it so casually and generally regarded their female partners as interchangeable. Certainly it was not an important matter like τμή, about which one could become passionate. This casual attitude toward sex is clearly seen in XXIV, 129–131 where Thetis links it with food. Lines 130–133 were athetized by Aristarchus on the grounds that it was improper advice for a mother to give to a son.
However, there are two passages which suggest that Achilles really loved Briseis. First, in his speech in book IX he says, “from me alone of the Greeks he has taken the wife of my heart and has her” (335–336): and then, “any good and sensible man loves and cares for his own woman as I loved her from my heart although she was acquired by my spear.” (341–343). Many editors have avoided this meaning for lines 335–336 by putting a full stop after ἔλεγεν (the first word of line 336). That way “wife of his heart” would refer to Clytemnestra. They argue that it is impossible for Achilles to call Briseis his ἱλιοκός since that word is always used of a legitimate wife and it contradicts other parts of his speech (394–400 and, indeed, the last part of 336–337). However, Achilles calling Briseis his wife can be explained by the nature of this speech. It is certainly an extraordinary speech. In it all the pent up rage of a passionate person breaks out. His speech moves from specific considerations of honour in the heroic code to questioning the heroic code itself in the face of the annihilation by death. He jumps around and even makes obviously incorrect statements (e.g. the plural in 327). So the contradictions in the word ἱλιοκός are understandable, especially since by calling her “the wife of my heart” he brings out the injustice that while he is fighting for Menelaus’ wife, his own woman has been taken away. This increases the insult. 41 Lines 341–343 also contain an extreme oddity: the assumption that it is a characteristic of an ἀγαθός to love his own woman. Of course, one might try to explain this by the fact that φιλέω in Homer is an activity of a superior to a dependent and has a very different range of meaning from the English word ‘love’. 42 But in this sentence the addition of κηδέω (342), the adverbial phrase ἐκ θυμοῦ (343), and the concessive “though she was acquired by my spear” all indicate that Achilles is talking about something very close to our concept of love.

However, even in 335–343 Achilles does not show the slightest sign of taking Briseis seriously as a human being in her own right. These protestations of love emphasize the wrong done to him. It never occurs to him to argue that Agamemnon committed an injustice because Briseis did not want to be taken to him. Besides, in the rest of his speech, Achilles does not consider his feelings towards Briseis but regards his loss of her as significant because of the insult to his honour, as he did in book I. In line 319 he complains that theκεκόκκος and ἐσθλὸς are in the same τιμῇ. In 336–337, if we accept that the ἱλιοκός is Briseis, he says “let him lie beside her and enjoy himself”. In 367–368 he complains that Agamemnon took his γέρας . . . , ἔφυβριζον. Furthermore, if his real

41. That it increases the insult was noticed by a scholiast. Moses Finley (above, note 2, p. 147) tries to explain 335–336 by the fact that ἱλιοκός does not mean wife but bed-mate. But as he proceeds to state ancient Greek never had a proper word for wife. This is a grotesque overuse of etymology. Among modern English speakers ninety-nine per cent of those who use the word slave do not realize the obvious fact that it comes from Slav. Even those people who know its derivation use it without the intention of insulting Poles and Ukrainians. Another example is the popularity of the name Isidore among Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century. This did not imply any Isis worship.

concern were his love for Briseis not the insult, he would take her back now that she is offered. Instead, he says that even if Agamemnon would offer him infinitely more, he would not persuade him nor pay for the insult (379–387). Then he says that Peleus will find a wife for him (394).

The second passage which implies love by Achilles for Briseis is XVIII, 446 where Thetis is speaking to Hephaestus. A. T. Murray in the Loeb translates it as “Verily in grief for her was he wasting his heart”. However, the participle ἀχέον in the Iliad sometimes has the meaning of grieving because of anger. In fact, sometimes it virtually means being angry. That is certainly the case in IX, 567. It is even more strikingly true in II, 694 where it appears with its object in the genitive as in XVIII, 446. In II, 689 Homer explains that Achilles lay in his ships “angry because of the girl Briseis”. Then (690–693) he tells of when Achilles captured her. In 694, with his typical ring structure he recapitulates with the words “ἀχέον for her”. That is probably the meaning of ἀχέον in XVIII, 446, since in the previous two lines Thetis said, “The girl that the Greeks chose out for him as a prize has lord Agamemnon taken from his hands.” But even if XVIII, 446 could be construed as implying that he was wasting away for love of Briseis, still, like IX, 335–343, it would be an isolated instance amidst many statements that suggest the contrary. Certainly personal feelings for Briseis never determine the course of the plot and in the next book (XIX) in lines 59–60 Achilles says “Would that Artemis had killed her (Briseis) with an arrow among the ships on the day when I took her, having destroyed Lyrnessus.” This shows the most incredibly brutal and callous disregard for Briseis as a human being. However, Homer does not let his audience forget that Briseis is a human being. Two hundred and twenty-seven lines after Achilles wishes she had died, an amazing and shocking thing happens: Briseis opens her mouth and speaks (287–300). She has been a centre of interest since the beginning of the Iliad. She had been constantly discussed and bargained over. But it has never occurred to any of the male characters to have the slightest consideration for her feelings. In fact, no male character has acted as if he were aware that she had any feelings. In the entire Iliad, no one addresses a word to her. However, Homer knew more than his characters. In XIX, 287–300 he

43. The only exception is, of course, Patroclus. But it is only here that we learn of Patroclus’ concern for her. In all the talk about Briseis that went on previously, Patroclus’ concern for her was never mentioned. The audience had the impression that everyone regarded her as an object. Now the audience discovers this was not true. But Homer has kept this revelation about Patroclus until after his death. Because of this timing it increases instead of mitigating Briseis’ tragedy. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that the only two major characters to die in the Iliad, Patroclus and Hector, were also the only two warriors to be kind and sympathetic in their relationships with women.
imprints on the audience’s mind that Briseis’ feelings are real and serious and her life is truly tragic.\textsuperscript{44}

Briseis has come upon the body of Patroclus because Odysseus insisted that Achilles accept Agamemnon’s gifts in order that the proper procedure be followed. These included, “seven tripods . . . twenty flashing cauldrons, twelve horses, seven women skilled in chores and the eighth was Briseis of the beautiful cheeks” (XIX, 243–246). Now, after Briseis speaks, Homer adds “around her the women wailed, openly for Patroclus, but each one for her own sorrows” (301–302). So Homer lets the audience know that these women, whom his characters regard as being on the same level as tripods and horses, are also real people with histories just as tragic as the one Briseis has just revealed. However, book XIX is not the first place that Homer shows that he is aware that Briseis is a genuine human being with emotions and preferences of her own. The first time that he as a narrator mentions her (as opposed to his characters mentioning her) is I, 348. There he says that she left Achilles and went to Agamemnon “unwilling”. This is a detail that had no interest for his male characters.

The following conclusions can now be drawn. First, Homer had different attitudes from his characters.\textsuperscript{45} He knew that women are complete human beings and constantly emphasized how deep and intense their feelings are. By doing this he demonstrated how brutal the conduct of the men in the \textit{Iliad} is. This situation was greatly aggravated by the fact that the action takes place in the midst of a war. In addition Homer emphasizes as much as possible the frustrating helplessness and ineffectuality of his female characters. After all, even during a war and even in a male dominated society the women at Troy could have had some range for effective action. In the most sexist societies women can sometimes manipulate men, just as in a slave society slaves can sometimes manipulate their masters. In the stories that his characters tell he includes a woman who is sexually aggressive (VI, 160–161), a mother who convinces her son to do something that changes his life (IX, 451–453) and a wife who convinces her husband to make a fundamental change in policy (IX, 590–

\textsuperscript{44} It has been suggested by Walter Kaufmann (\textit{Tragedy and Philosophy}, N.Y., 1968, p. 142) that this effect of having Briseis speak after her complete silence inspired the Cassandra scene in Aeschylus’ \textit{Agamemnon}. Certainly it seems likely that a dramatic stroke as powerful as this Briseis scene would have influenced Aeschylus, especially since he was so influenced by Homer in style (Kaufmann, pp. 136–142) and content (Gilbert Murray, \textit{Aeschylus}, Oxford, 1940, pp. 160–170); and, indeed, acknowledged his dependence on Homer. (If we can believe Athenaeus, \textit{The Deipnosophists} VIII, 347E). However, Homer’s direct influence would not have been in creating a character like Cassandra, since the audience expects her to speak. Instead, the exact analogue of Briseis is Pylades in the \textit{Choephoroi}. What H. Kitto observed of him is doubly true of Briseis (\textit{Form and Meaning in Drama}, London, 1956, p. 53); “Pylades has been on the stage . . . most of the time, a mute ‘super’ . . . We have fully accepted him as such; nothing is further from our minds than that he should speak. Therefore when he does, the effect is like a thunderclap.”

\textsuperscript{45} This includes his female characters. For although they make proposals, resent their condition or even hate the man to whom they are attached (as Helen does), still they never show any sign of realizing how oppressive and unfair the basic pattern of intersexual relationships is. The same point, that Homer had different attitudes than his characters, was also argued by me in my article on Hector (above, note 29).
595). But in the main narrative, Helen resents and struggles against her passion for Paris. Hecabe's desperate pleas have no effect on Hector and neither Andromache nor Hecabe can influence their husbands. The same applies to Briseis. There would have been no reason why Patroclus' attitude towards her should not have been manifested while he was alive or why another character could not have shown the same feelings. However, Homer was intent on showing the effects of the intersexual attitudes of his characters without any mitigating circumstances; thus making the tragedy of the women more complete. I doubt whether he did this in order to urge social reform. Rather I think his procedure must be linked to his incredible genius for creating interesting characters. He simply saw the potentialities of the women characters: intense, emotional, intelligent people who are trapped in a passive role; and exploited it in order to increase the appeal of his story.
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