Family Relationship In Iliad

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The Iliad is not a mere tale of battles such as the Trojan War, but it gives literary insights into the characteristics of human interactions. One of the most conspicuous interactions exhibited in the Iliad is the parent-child relationship, where the epic narrative shows the existence of the world beyond the battlefield where parents and children engage in intimate and intense interaction that is characterized by a feeling of interdependency, mutual concern, affection, and love, while other cases depict tension in their relationship that results in negative consequences such as curses and hatred. The robust relationship between Priam and Hector offers a basis for analyzing other parent-child relationships and, most importantly, between Achilles and his mother, Thetis, and Phoenix and his father, Amyntor (Griffin, 1980).

The Father-Son Relationship Between Priam And Hector

Priam's household is superbly presented as a patriarchal family. The Trojan King resides in his palace with his wife Hacuba, twelve daughters, and fifty sons, along with their families and children. As such, he is considered happy and fortunate. However, at the end of the Iliad, most of Priam's sons had been killed, reducing his status to that of a miserable man. However, what is most important in this analysis is his relationship with his son, Hector, because he is a hero and, conspicuously, the best Trojan warrior.

The bond between Hector and Priam is strong. The fatherly love and care are exhibited in several instances, including Priam's efforts to bar Hector from fighting with Achilles, his courageous initiative to visit Achilles' tent so as to beseech him to return Hector's body and the efforts made by Hector to look for his own ways to make his father proud and accomplish his filial duty.

The attitude that Priam holds towards his son shows immense love and concern. While Hector is waiting for his enemy outside the Scaean gates, his parents make attempts to bar him from fighting with Achilles in order to protect him. Priam begs his son not to fight, highlighting two varied sets of tensions that include heroic dictates versus paternal desire and king versus father. Based on the lines of priority, it is evident that his paternal role as a father outweighs his role as a King in the effort to restrain his son from fighting.

Priam's grief towards the loss of his son was absolutely expected, but the way he expressed it was

peculiar, portraying the tight and close tie between the father and the son. He immerses himself in mud, groans painfully, and expresses his desire to intrude into the Achaean camp to get the body of his dead son back. His eagerness is so intense that his people are unable to restrain him, and in his grief, he speaks to his people as a mourning father rather than a King.

The decision by Priam to visit Achilles' tent and his subsequent accomplishment further reveal the father-son relationship that he had with his son, Hector. The decision gets support from the gods, and Zeus judges him as the most appropriate individual to request Hector's corpse. This bold initiative to visit Achilles' tent incontestably shows the deep affection and fatherly love towards his son.

Analysis Of The Relationship Between Achilles And Thetis

The relationship between Thetis and Achilles can be considered as the most important mother-son relationship in the Iliad. Thetis, a Nereid, fears mortality and is highly overprotective of her son. She is bitter about raising him to have a short life span. This overprotectiveness is also depicted by Priam, who was bitter about his son Hector going to fight Achilles, and just as Thetis did not have power over Achilles' choice of leading a short life as a mortal, he could not have prevented his fate of dying at the hands of Achilles (Homer, 1898).

Just like the one between Priam and Hector, the relationship between Thetis and Achilles is characterized by love and concern. She aspires to see her son succeed in his efforts, and she gives him knowledge that other mothers of heroes cannot do. She informs him of his destiny and goes ahead to commission the famous Achilles' shield from Hephaestus to assist him in his role as a warrior. Achilles acknowledges that she loves him and goes ahead and requests her not to prevent him from the fight despite the fact that she loves him.

The strong emotional connection between Achilles and Thetis is depicted when Thetis laments her son's fate, but she has no ability to save him. She feels sad that he was born mortal, which is accompanied by her sense of guilt. The strong emotional expression resembles that of Priam after the death of Hector, where he was struck with grief and could not control his mourning as a father.

From the analysis, it is evident that the relationship between Thetis and Achilles is strong, loving and caring. However, the connection between the two is cut short by fate when Achilles leads a short life just like any other mortal, a fact that was beyond his mother's control despite the fact that she was a goddess.

References

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