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### **Woman's Contribution to Society**

In the time of the Iliad, a novel by Homer written in the twelfth century, women did not play a dominant role in the human way of life. The men fought the battles, brought home the food, and controlled the household. The women simply look after the children and tended to the housework. The initiators of the action and the rulers of the land were the God's and Goddess's. Zeus was the ultimate power of the land. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, and, Hera, queen of the god's, are strong female characters in the novel. Mortal woman did not hold a main position in Greek culture. The goddess's are forceful and witty making them nearly undefeated by the God's. The woman's contribution to society may have appeared diminutive at the time but the huge input of the goddess's implies woman may have been the most influential element of the culture.

Goddess's, Athena and Hera, are among the most powerful forces in the book. Gods and mortal men often call upon these women for help in times of need. To show how powerful she is, Hera, the wife of Zeus, repeatedly acts behind his back when they disagree. In book 8, Hera, convinces Agamemnon to revive his troops in order to win the war. Athena also gives support to the Greeks during the war. Often times the Greeks pray to Athena for protection. In book 5, Diomedes prays to the goddess Athena for revenge upon the Trojan's. She gives him heroic strength and the incredible power to distinguish and defeat the gods in battle. Both goddesses' greatly favor the Achaeans and give their

soldiers valuable aid, and outwardly show their hatred toward the Trojans. The women of Greek mythology have bright minds, devious mannerisms and sharp tongues in which they use to get their way when dealing with the God's in judgment.

When it comes to strong mortal woman, the book has little to offer. Barely any women even appear in the text. The few women who appear in the story fall into two categories, property of the men and women to entertain or converse with the men. The men treat Chryseis and Briseis like property. Agamemnon steals Chryseis from her father, Chryses. When he is forced to return her, he claims Briseis for his prize. This outrages Achilles and starts a battle. Helen was said to be the most beautiful woman in the ancient world. Homer uses Helen to show Paris's cowardly side. Helen is said to be the cause of the Trojan War. Andromache, begs Hector to withdraw from the war and brings out a sensitive side to her husband. These women all play a very small parting the text. Their significance lies not in their character but in the way they sway and enlighten the men around them.

The women were not given the acknowledgment they deserve considering the incredible impact they made on the lives of the men. The Goddess's were prayed to in time of need and often gave support to the warriors. The mortal women entertained the men and influenced their decisions by enticing and persuading them. The women of the novel may not appear to be important compared to the great warriors. Homer inserts the women to show the love and respect the men held for the women.