



VIDHYAYANA

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

**Comparison of Achilles from Homer's *Iliad* and various characters from
Mahabharata of Maharshi Ved Vyas**



Brijraj Raval

Research Scholar

Dept. of English & CLS

Saurashtra University, Rajkot

Dr. K. G. Rathod

Head, Dept. of English,

DKV Arts College, Jamnagar



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

History displays the grand vision of the deeds, sins and karma performed by our ancestors to justify their own selfish belief. An epic can be considered as a narration in the poetic language on a grand scale that displays the deeds of heroes, antiheroes, deities, sometimes the God himself takes part in the scenario. It tells about the warrior and heroes, who were supported by the supernatural powers for the specific purpose or that focuses on a specific goal. It may also incorporate myth, folktales, legends and history. Epics often signify the nation in a grandiose manner.

Basically there are two types of epics:

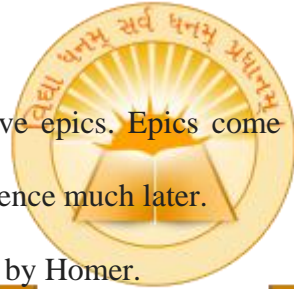
1) Primary and

2) Secondary

Primary:-

Primary Epics are also known as primitive epics. Epics come from the oral tradition from generation to generation. The written form took its existence much later.

Ex: *Mahabharata* by Ved Vyasa and *Iliad* by Homer.



VIDHYAYANA

Secondary:-

Secondary Epics consists an identity as literary, these were composed directly by the composers.

Ex: 'Paradise Lost' by John Milton

Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is the Sanskrit epic written by Maharshi Ved Vyasa (Krishnadwepayana) that is famous in Bharat (that can be explained in Southern Asia) and not only in India. This epic expresses a great war, struggle, conflict, discrimination, ups and downs for the possession of right on the kingdom of India. This epic delivers 100,000 couplets and it is the world's largest form in the genre.



VIDHYAYANA

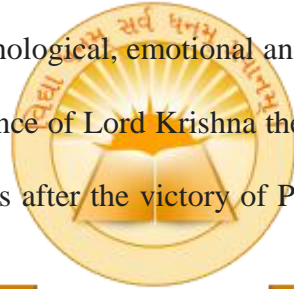
ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

The central plot concerns a war, fought among cousins for the succession of the throne. The rivals; five 'Pandavas' sons of a deceased king 'Pandu' and the hundred Kauravas sons of a blind king Dhritrashtra who struggled for the possession of the ancestral Kingdom Bharat with a capital city Hasthinapur, the city of elephant, (here 'Elephants' shows the glory and wealth) on the river banks of the Ganga, at north central India. The five Pandavas on the first side were feathered by 5 Gods, *Dharmadeva* (the king of Justice), *Vayu* (the king of Wind), *Indra* (the king of *Svarga*, Heaven), and *Ashwini Kumara* (*Nasatya* and *Dasra*, the Lords of Life and Youth), who are constantly guided and assisted by various Gods, deities and Brahmins too, throughout the story and on the other side the hundred Kauravas who are believed as human incarnation of Demons, who always opposed the morality and virtues who were born grotesquely.

The story moves with social, psychological, emotional and political struggles of Pandavas constantly harassed by the Kauravas but with assistance of Lord Krishna the incarnation (Avatar) of Lord Vishnu. The throne was conquered by the rightful heirs after the victory of Pandavas in the war of Kurukshetra and the story ends.



VIDHYAYANA

Iliad:

Iliad is also one of the great epic, focuses on the great Trojan war between the kingdom of Troy and the king Agamemnon supported by a skillful warrior, Achilles. The epic is written in Greek by Homer explaining a great war and the fall of Troy. It consists nearly 15,693 lines. The story depicts many aspects, how Gods destruct human entities and human life for their own selfish purposes and also a love story of Paris, the prince of Troy and Helen, the wife of Menelaus, the king of Sparta.

The central plot concern the story of Achilles as the central character (Protagonist) the greatest and the fiercest warrior of Greece in 'Bronze age'. The son of Thetis, a nymph and Peleus the king of



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

Myrmidons. The Greeks and Spartans started the war against the Troy with the support of Achilles and his troops, War continued for 9 years and after dishonored by Agamemnon, Achilles drew back his support against Troy and refuse to battle. On the other hand Patroclus, Achilles' cousin wore Achilles' armor and participated the war and was killed by Hector, the Trojan hero, Paris' brother and a prince of Troy. In answer Achilles kills Hector outside the gate of Troy, but still the Troy was undefeated and for that Greek commander Odysseus created a strategy to pretend as giving up the war by leaving Trojan beaches and giving a huge wooden horse as a present to Troy. Troy accepted the gift unknowingly that the giant wooden horse was hollow from the inside and it was armed by the Greek troops who were about to destroy the Troy city. The epic concluded with the death of Achilles by the Trojan Prince Paris, with a divine arrow guided by Apollo (the son of Zeus) at his heel that was the one and only woundable part of Achilles.



VIDHYAYANA

Comparison

Thematic parallels

One cannot deny that in one or the other way the reason of both the Wars the Mahabharata and the Trojan War was a female character. The Iliad can be compared with Mahabharata and the Ramayana, another Indian epic, where the king of Lanka Ravana fled away the wife of Rama (the incarnation of Lord Vishnu) across the sea.

The dishonor of Kauravas and Karna was started during the *Swayamvar* of Draupadi and followed by the literal insult of Kauravas done by Draupadi at the palace of Indraprastha. In Iliad the heroine Helen was fled away by Paris a Trojan prince. The event that invited the Trojan war and the fall of kingdom.



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal



VIDHYAYANA



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

Comparison of Characters:

Bhishma and Achilles-

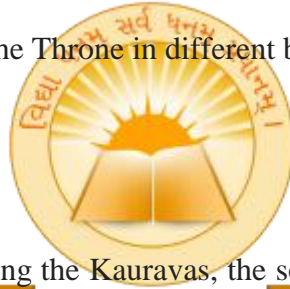
(from the divine birth both the great for ears can be compared)

Devvrat known as Bhishma was named for his *Bhishma Pratigya* the severe oath, a pledge of celibacy.

Bhishma was a son of goddess Ganga (Supernatural) and a mortal King of Kuru dynasty, Shantanu.

(note: if Supernatural part can be done then different parts can be done for all the Warriors especially Bhishma and Achilles' Supernatural birth was there and I decided Death was also there.)

Bhishma, the great warrior pledged that he will always serve the throne but never become a king, on the other hand Achilles was also a son of an immortal mother Thetis (Supernatural), and a mortal father Peleus. Although Achilles was the greatest warrior of Greece but he wasn't a king and he wasn't interested even to become a king, he always served the Throne in different battles.



VIDHYAYANA

Duryodhan and Achilles-

Duryodhan, the eldest brother among the Kauravas, the son of Gandhari and Dhritarashtra, the Kuru king on the throne of Bharata. Gandhari was aware that his son was mortal and he could be defeated and killed by the Pandavas especially Bheema. So, to make him invulnerable, partially immortal Gandhari called Duryodhan naked to her during the war, as she was about to open her eyes for first time after her marriage, and with the help of her powers she was capable to make Duryodhan unwoundable. But Lord Krishna misguided Duryodhana and suggested him to wear a piece of cloth on the waist to due respect in honour of mother and the plan succeeded. Duryodhan became woundable only on west and that caused his death during the dual with Bheema.

After the birth of Achilles his mother Thetis wanted to make him immortal and for that she dipped Achilles into the river Styx holding him through his heel, unknowingly that the heel was the only undipped part of the body, that was now woundable. And that became the reason of his death, according to the



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

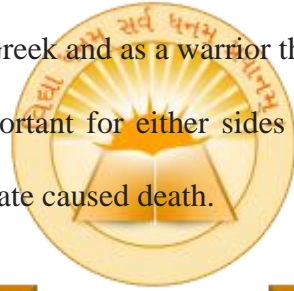
legends; Paris shot at divine arrow on Achilles' heels and caused his death.

Karna and Achilles-

Karna, son of Kunti and the lord Sun but the birth of Karna was just an experiment that was done unknowingly before marriage of Kunti, so this child was secret for society. The child was gifted with *Kavach and Kundala*, a gold shield and earring. Shield armour and earring presenting the power of the Sun. Karan was aware with his support to the Kauravas was that he was at a wrong side but due to the respect and support given by Duryodhana in past, he could not change his side up to the end of himself by Arjuna.

On the other hand Achilles was also having a new armour by the God Hepatitis that was requested by his mother that was to protect him after the death of Partocules. Achilles was well aware by Agamemnon's plan and strategies but still he supported Greek and as a warrior that brought him to his end by Paris.

Both the warriors were very important for either sides and performed vital role in wars. Though destiny and Gods haven't supported their fate caused death.



VIDHYAYANA



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Reffered E-Journal

Conclusion:

As we don't have any appropriate proof, we can not say that there is an imitation in any of the epics because both the Authors were masters of their time and they actually created the master piece that we can study today. Thus, through this content one can make out that human beings, from their existance are facing similar kind of problems and situation.

References:

Vyasa, Ved. *Shree Shivamahapurana*. Surat: Sahitya Sankul, 2017.

Prawer, S. S. *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction* Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. London, England. 1st Ed. 1973

Bassnett, Susan. *Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century Project* Muse (E-Copy) 2004

Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. *Indian Writing In English* Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, India. 18th Ed. 2010

Naik, M.K. *A History of Indian English Literature* Sahitya Akademi Publishers, New Delhi, India. 4thEd. 1995.



VIDHYAYANA