Individual Reflection

Our group project focused on the stature and virtue of women in the Homeric epics, with some extensions to general culture in ancient Greece. In particular we chose the phrase, “οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν” [IL.1.115], to highlight the objectification and that women fall victim to throughout.

The chosen phrase translates to ‘neither in form nor stature’, as explained in the collaborative work. It is evident from its use in the comparison of woman, often by heroes, while discussing their wives, ‘prizes’ and potential mistresses, that women were seen as physical objects to be used for pleasure and financial gain. Both Odysseus and Agamemnon compare their wives with other women, although in wildly different circumstances, in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* respectively.

In my individual reflection, I will be focusing in particular on the devaluation of women and their achievements, including their virtue and stature, by comparison and objectification in the Homeric epics, with reference to the extension of this subject to ancient Greek culture as a whole, as well as some comparison to the subject in the modern day.

The first relevant instance comes about one hundred lines into the first book of the *Iliad*, with Agamemnon’s selfish behaviour and his quarrel with Achilleus. Here Agamemnon compares his wife Klytaimnestra with Chriseïs. He states that Chriseïs ‘is no way inferior, neither in build nor stature nor wit, not in accomplishment’(Il.1.113-5). Agamemnon, while upset about having to give up his ‘prize’(Il.1.118), is quick to devalue his wife so that he may gain more from the loss of Chriseïs. This is because