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***Troy* and the Summer of 2004**

Warner Brothers' film *Troy*, directed by Wolfgang Petersen, was a failure, measured by its take at the box office in the United States. It made a little over \$133 million, a disappointing amount compared to the whopping \$436 million garnered by *Shrek 2*. Moreover, by July, it had disappeared from most American screens. Whether *Troy* will find a new life in its DVD and video release is another question, one that has a special significance for classicists in two ways. First, will our students come to Homer with images of the film and its particular rewriting of Homer's world and story? Second, if the film is used in the classroom, what sort of use will we make of it? The answers to these questions are troubling not only because of the film's appeal to distinctly unHomeric and contemporary popular political and sexual notions, but also because of the film's relation to its cultural and political context, other films, the news from Iraq, the struggle over same-sex marriage, and the presidential campaign.

In his review of the film in *The New Yorker*, David Denby approvingly notes that the "filmmakers have changed the material from semicomprehensible legend to recognizable worldly strategy, from myth to politics, from archetype to psychology." In the process, this paper argues, they offer the viewer simplistic notions of their own world to make sense of Homer's. To put it rather crudely, Agamemnon is a greedy imperialist; Achilles becomes an alienated glory hound; honor has one dimension; and sexuality is exclusively heterosexual. I examine how these modes of making Homer familiar and modern fit into the images of heroism, politics, and gender in other films released in the Summer of 2004 and how some of its cast, Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom, and Eric Bana, inflect the other films in which they appeared, *Legends of the Fall*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *The Hulk*. Then, I turn to the intersection of the film's politics with representations of events mentioned above. Especially important for the film's initial release were the reports and photographs from Abu Ghraib that filled the newspapers and air-waves the first weeks of *Troy*'s run. The treatment of prisoners raised questions about American imperialism; commentators and politicians in the United States worried about American honor; and the photographs put on display American-made images of naked men, defeated Iraqis rather than Hollywood stars.