

## From Epic to Novel: Homer's *Iliad* and Malouf's Ransom

The famous scene of King Priam's ransom of his son Hektor's corpse can be viewed from many different perspectives. Modern readers first encounter this moving episode in the last book of Homer's *Iliad*, an oral epic written down around the 8th century BCE. A little under a year ago, Australian writer David Malouf transformed the famous scene into a 21st century novel. As a result, we have one story in two forms: one an epic poem and the other a modern novel. An analysis of these two different literary works reveals the effects of form on content. In four brief presentations, our panel will investigate several aspects of this transformation. The first paper will focus on characterization, demonstrating how the modern interest in character development changes the perspective of a story and, consequently, the overarching plot. The second presentation will assess the formal differences between a modern novel and a traditional epic poem. The third area of analysis will concern the profound effects of changes in narrative style: A juxtaposition of Homer's dactylic hexameter with the modern prose sentence reveals the dissimilarities between parataxis (linear narrative without subordination) and syntaxis (subordination). The final presentation will explore the relationship between the modern novel and the epic poem in terms of dependency: An appreciation of one literary work necessitates comprehension of its counterpart. In other words, knowledge of the ancient epic leads to greater understanding and respect for the modern novel, and vice versa.