Epic of Gilgamesh and Contemporary Pop Culture

Institutional Affiliation

Date

29th November 2018

The idea of Superheroes is classified as popular culture primarily due to its popularity and depiction in different forms of arts including films, television series, comic books and art as well. Being part of the contemporary popular culture we realize, the ideas of superheroes borrows from ancient stories where some superheroes are a depiction of characters in certain ancient legends such as Thor who is a superhero depicted from the Greek mythology of the god Thor. Having established that ancient literature and art plays a vital role in the depiction and development of superheroism, we evaluate one of the oldest superhero stories. The Epic of Gilgamesh in comparison to modern popular culture.

The epic of Gilgamesh has been thought to influence the superhero namely Hulk. One of the main reasons is because the Hulk like Gilgamesh is extremely built and physically stronger than any other human. Their physical appearance, therefore, is seen as one of the factors that contribute to the linking between this contemporary character and the ancient superhero Gilgamesh. Physical appearance is however not the only reason to compare Marvel’s hulk to Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was a very destructive personality especially because he had so much power (Sandars, 1972). This made him attack people in his village and force them to follow his will. Hulk is also a highly destructive character, with his extreme built and immense power he destroys buildings and properties especially when he is disoriented and distracted from doing the right things (Thomas et al., 2003). Due to their destructive characters both Hulk and Gilgamesh can be classified as explosive. When comparing hulk and his rivals we realize that he is indestructible and remains unbeaten, this is also similar to Gilgamesh because he remained unbeaten by anyone even by Enkidu who was built to be of equal strength.

Another similarity between Gilgamesh and Hulk is the fact that they are both mortals. While we have seen popular culture depicting most superheroes as immortal such as Thor and others, we realize that this is not the case for Hulk. Due to the fact that is the Alter ego of a human being, he is also subjected to the same mortality as a human. For Gilgamesh, we realize that even with all his might, the thing that he craved the most was to gain immortality which even in the end he did not attain. Both Gilgamesh and Hulk despite their destructive nature have the characteristics of heroes since they do heroic things. Gilgamesh is known in Uruk and beyond for the many battles that he fought and won while Hulk in his adventures uses his destructive physics to do heroic things (Kohut, 2014).

The epic of Gilgamesh can also be linked to the superhero Batman in several ways. One of the main similarity between the epic of Gilgamesh and Batman is the fact that both of these characters are exceptional figures in their society. Gilgamesh was adored and beloved in Uruk, and even after his death, he remained the most talked about the hero in history. The main reason for this is that even though Gilgamesh was destructive, he cared about protecting Uruk and its people. This character relates keenly to Batman. There is no Gotham city without Batman (Darius, 2005). Batman cares a lot about his city. Living in a society with so many issues, he uses his abilities to try and reduce them in order to give the people of his city a chance to lead better lives. Both of these characters, therefore, have a great love for their society which makes Gilgamesh the ruler of Uruk and Batman Gotham’s savior.

Gilgamesh also influences Batman in that both characters are human and mortal, but they are able to achieve extraordinary things. Batman, unlike many contemporary heroes, has no supernatural powers, his expertise is hard learned through immense training and advanced by the use of technology. Gilgamesh was born a physically strong man whose achievements were not influenced by any seer natural powers. Both of these characters are therefore similar in this front. Another character similarity that evidences influence from Gilgamesh is that both Gilgamesh and Batman are adamant at things they want. Gilgamesh is extremely driven by the need to become immortal, and he goes to great lengths to gain it even though he eventually is not granted immortality. Batman, on the other hand, is highly driven by the moral of preserving life which means he cannot kill. Even when faced with the deadliest and most annoying villains he does not compromise on his moral beliefs (LoCicero, 2007).

Batman is also seen to borrow from the epic of Gilgamesh in that the superhero character Batman is more of a rebel who does not follow orders rather takes his own ways while trying to achieve what he needs. This is similar to the character of Gilgamesh since he was described as a menace for he did not follow society norms especially because he was aware of his physical strength. He was seen to recruit young boys even those who were mere children and seduce all the women who led people to complain to the God’s about him. These characters are similar in their rebelliousness even though they differ in their intentions since Batman’s rebellion led to good deeds (LoCicero, 2007).

Following this analysis, we realize that old literature plays a key role in contemporary pop culture. In this evaluation, we realize that the Epic of Gilgamesh has shaped the idea of superheroism in several superhero movies in character formation.

References

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