

# Essay on life-death

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Both stories the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Ancient Greece, The Iliad and Odyssey (Homer) bring out that there is a possible interaction between man and gods. These gods and men can cooperate in various ways to pursue a given cause. This relationship between gods and man presented in these stories create a different understand of life and death in these two texts. This paper seeks to explain the relationship that exists between men and gods as presented in Epic of Gilgamesh and the Ancient Greece, The Iliad and Odyssey (Homer). In addition, this paper explains how the relationship between gods and man shape the understanding of Life and Death.

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the first concept that is brought out in regarding gods and man is that they can be interact in various ways. At the onset of the book, characters such Enkidu and Gilgamesh have both the qualities of gods and man. These men have exceptional characterizes that make them more powerful and witty compared to common men. This insinuates that gods have special qualities that make them more powerful than men (Cunningham, 2012, p. 44). It is because of the godlike qualities that are possessed by these two characters that allow them to be able to be more powerful such that they are in a position to oppress men. Gilgamesh for example was able to establish an empire for himself using the godlike qualities that he possesses. Gilgamesh was able to run this empire using the godlike powers that he possessed. Through his power, he was able to benefit from forced labor that aided in the construction of various buildings in his empire. Gilgamesh was able to acquire a lot of wealth and riches by taking from the weaker men. The most humiliating thing for the common men under Gilgamesh Empire was the fact that he met his lust with any woman

that he desired. This meant that he could sleep with women who were married to other people. The meta-question in this question is whether it was his manlike qualities that made him this evil or it was his godlike qualities. In this case, it is plausible to argue that it was his man-like qualities that contributed to his evil behaviors and actions.

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, gods are also portrayed as being the put men in check if man strays from the path of goodness. For example, when both Gilgamesh and Enkidu are involved in the stealing of trees from the holy tree, the gods punish both culprits (Foster, 2001, p. 24). The gods convene a council during which they decide the favorable punishment for the duo. The final verdict that is reached as way of punishing both individuals is that Enkidu had to die. This decision is executed as way of punishing both Enkidu and Gilgamesh who was close to Enkidu (Damrosch, 2007, p. 31). Therefore, it is through gods in the Epic of Gilgamesh that man are able to be put in check and punished for the atrocities that they commit.

The power that rests with the gods shapes the understanding of man regarding life and death. According to the Epic of Gilgamesh man is mortal and will always die in the end. On the contrary gods are immortal and are therefore able to live forever. It is by the understanding that gods have the power to live forever that Gilgamesh approaches gods with the hopes that he can be able to get eternal life. However, the plant of everlasting life that is given to Gilgamesh is however stolen by the serpent (Budge, 1920, p. 43). This means that the Gilgamesh is not able to obtain the ability to have eternal life. Therefore, the relationship of man and gods creates the idea that gods have the ability to create immortality but mortal men are subjective to

death.

In the Iliad and Odyssey (Homer) the relationship of gods and man are similar to those of In the Epic of Gilgamesh. It is the power of the gods that aid Odysseus is able to successfully able to conquer Troy. However, as a mortal man Odysseus is powerless. He is not able to go back to Ithaca once he won the war in Troy. He is held up by Calypso in the island Ogygia. Calypso holds Odysseus in the island due to the lust that she has for him (Sanders, 1977, p. 59). She does not want the king to go back to his wife and son. It is through gods that the prince, Odysseus is able to know about the island where the King is imprisoned. After the King is free from the island, there are plans to have killed at sea because of the atrocities that he had committed to the people. Just as Gilgamesh was punished for committing various atrocities toward his people, Odysseus was also to be punished by Poseidon who was the god of the sea (Chapman, 1956, p. 29). Poseidon aims at punishing Odysseus owing to the fact that Odysseus has been involved in making the son of the god blind. Therefore, Poseidon had a grudge on Odysseus for the evil act that he had committed on the god's son. Luckily, Athena, the god of intelligence and reason did not find it plausible to punish Odysseus for this crime (Lang, 1935, p. 17). His success in Troy averted the atrocities that he had committed at the time. Athena was able to rescue Odysseus from the wrath of Poseidon and he is able to get a safe passage through the sea to his palace (Butler, 1952, p. 34). Therefore, the different gods that are portrayed in Iliad and Odyssey (Homer) possess different qualities and manage different locales are areas (Gochberg, 2000, p. 67). For example the god Poseidon controls the sea while Athena specializes on

intelligence and reason. Therefore, the relationship between man and the gods in Iliad and Odyssey (Homer) brings out the idea that gods have the ability to both kill and save man from death.

## References

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