

# Hero archetypes: comparison and contrast between socrates



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Throughout history, humans have always attempted to explain the world through myth. The hero archetype is one of the oldest and most popular myths in existence. It is often embodied by a person who leaves behind the familiar to embark on various adventures. He then returns as a changed individual, with new insights and knowledge about life in general (Gilbert, 1992). Numerous studies on the hero archetype have already been conducted in order to explain its existence, as well as its relevance to human society and culture.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, for instance, argued that an archetype was “ a projection of humans’ collective or universal unconscious” (Silverblatt, Ferry and Finan, 1998). Simply put, an archetype represents a particular aspect of the human psyche. The hero archetype, therefore, is the epitome of the best in human character and achievement. In the process, it inspires people to recognize and hone their own positive qualities (Silverblatt, Ferry and Finan, 1998). Socrates and Jesus Christ are two of the most well-known hero archetypes in history.

Socrates is a Greek theorist who is regarded as one of the key figures in Western philosophy. Christ, meanwhile, is the central figure of Christianity. Both were wise and moral, drawing large crowds to their public lectures. Both also died for their principles. The Hemlock and the Cross Socrates and Christ were both killed for their beliefs on religion, which were misconstrued as “ evil” influences on the people. The Romans during the time of Christ were polytheistic. Thus, he was branded a heretic for teaching monotheism and claiming that he himself was divine.

Christ was likewise put to death because he questioned the oppression and discrimination that people of “ inferior” status experienced under Roman law - he believed that all people were equal (Epinions. com, 2002). Socrates, on the other hand, was executed because he was found “ guilty” of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens. But his real “ crime” was that he angered many Athenians by asking them questions that exposed problems in their manner of reasoning. In addition, Socrates worshipped the gods of Sparta instead of the gods of Athens.

Consequently, his opponents conspired to have him convicted and killed by making him drink a cup of hemlock (Epinions. com, 2002). View of Evil Christ and Socrates shared similar philosophies on the concept of evil. Socrates did not believe in revenge - avenging injustice with injustice is wrong and kindness is already a reward in itself. Christ, meanwhile, taught that a person should “ turn the other cheek” by loving his or her enemies and treating other people the way he or she wants to be treated. Socrates refused to escape his execution because he believed that running away will be a betrayal of his principles.

Although Christ was also aware that he will be crucified for his beliefs, he willingly accepted his fate on the cross in order to accomplish his mission of saving humankind from punishment for their sins (Epinions. com, 2002).

Teachings, As Told By Followers Christ and Socrates were both teachers. But, ironically, neither of them wrote any of their teachings. After their deaths, much of what was known about them and their teachings were derived from the accounts of their followers. The gospels of the New Testament -

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - recorded Christ’s life and ministry on earth.  
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The writings of Plato, such as Apology, Crito, Euthypro, Plato's Republic and Symposium, are the major sources of what is known about Socrates today (Epinions. com, 2002). Knowledge of the Truth One of the most striking differences between Socrates and Christ was that Socrates often claimed that he " does not know anything at all" (Bostick, 1916). He was not afraid confess his ignorance of the truth. For Socrates, individuals who claimed to know the truth were conceited and overestimated the knowledge that they have. Furthermore, only a man from God has the ability to show people the true way of life (Bostick, 1916).

Christ, on the other hand, has affirmations of truth and finality. By saying " I am the way, the truth and the life" and " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away," he is already implying that he is the only source of truth and the incarnation of right conduct (Bostick, 1916).

Changing People Christ and Socrates have different ways of changing people. Socrates associated salvation, righteousness and virtue with knowledge. People will do what is right if they know the exact knowledge of what is right.

If they knew the truth, as well as possessed the proper understanding of what is the truth, then they would become truthful individuals (Bostick, 1916). Christ, meanwhile, taught his followers that the heart was the source of evil. Salvation, therefore, entails not only instruction on what is right, but also the changing of the heart through repentance. For a person to truly express repentance for his or her sins, he or she must will his or her mind and will to do good. God hates sin, but lovingly forgives a repentant sinner

(Bostick, 1916). Conclusion The hero archetype served as a form of social control.

By extolling the values of a certain society, it is encouraging people to conform to acceptable behavior. But the hero archetype can also be used as a form of social criticism. It can be a reflection of the flaws of a given community. Socrates and Jesus Christ are examples of how the hero archetype is used as a form of social criticism, as well as a form of social control. Their execution because of vague and fraudulent charges showed the oppressive treatment given to those who dare to challenge a tyrannical status quo. On the other hand, they were the epitome of virtues such as courage, wisdom and truthfulness.