

Cla labor of hero

[History](#)



The Labors of a Hero The Labors of a Hero In many mythical stories, there always exists the protagonist who gains a hero status as the story progresses. A myriad of herculean tasks or challenges always face a hero, which he has to overcome to achieve the hero status. This paper compares and contrasts the labors of Herakles and Theseus, and various mythologies that espouse the role of male heroes and foster the understanding of hero-myth.

The labors of Herakles and Theseus

Herakles and Theseus were great Greek heroes who achieved feats considered to be beyond the realm of humankind. Herakles was the son of a god - Zeus, and a human - Alkmene while Theseus was the son of a king - Aegeus and Aethra. With regard to their births, Herakles, therefore, was superior in strength to Theseus as he hailed from a union between man and god (Powell, 2012).

Herakles labors resulted as a punishment for his murdering of his wife - princess Megara and all their children albeit with madness bestowed upon him by Hera. Theseus labors, on the other hand, were because of his quest to claim his birthright by taking the sword and sandals back to King Aegeus (Powell, 2012).

Both Herakles and Theseus were faced with labors, which they overcame despite everyone expecting them to fail. Herakles endured twelve labors while Theseus was faced with six labors. Herakles transcended his labors purely due to sheer strength while Theseus succeeded primarily due to his wit. Besides, Herakles was at most times supported by deities - Hermes and Athena - whenever he needed them while Theseus never had the support of deities.

After his success, Theseus united various Attic communities hence extending the territory of Attica. Herakles, on the other hand, after completing his twelve labors got the reward of immortality.

Hero-Myth and the Role of Male Heroes

The hero-myth dichotomy refers to the hero's movement from the normal world, into the supernatural facet where challenges are encountered and transcended, and finally the hero comes back to help men. The hero-myth has key markers such as one divine parent - for example Zeus in the case of Herakles. Another key characteristic of the hero-myth is that the birth of the hero may be unusual - such as in the case of Herakles where his birth was delayed by the intervention of Hera. Another key marker of the hero-myth is the great strength that the hero possesses - for instance - Perseus who kills the monster Medusa.

Almost all of the Greek mythical heroes were male. This orientation depicted the state of affairs at the time in Greece where males were assumedly warriors while the females were expected to handle house chores and bring up children. One of the key roles of the male heroes was to deliver society from the enclaves of suffering, as well as suffering. In addition, the male heroes' triumph in the face of adversity was a marker of the belief that everything was possible. Finally, the male heroes gave the gods a human face; this is because, in most cases, the gods could intervene to help the heroes transcend their adversaries.

In conclusion, the two Greek heroes, Herakles and Theseus both faced labors. Herakles labors were a form of punishment while Theseus's labors were because of his quest to redeem his birthright. The hero-myth orientation follows the path of the unusual birth of the hero, the hero's quest

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to transcend adversary, the hero receipt of help from the gods, his triumph, and finally a reward. The male characters played grave roles in myth such as enforcing the belief that everything is possible, and delivering of humanity from the shackles of suffering.

Reference

Powell, B. B. (2012). *Classical Myth*. Pearson.