

"the epic of  
gilgamesh" a story by  
maureen kovacs term  
paper



**ASSIGN  
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Heroism is a characteristic that entails a demonstration of unique traits by an individual, beyond ordinary expectations. The story of Gilgamesh and his achievements in the Epic of Gilgamesh portrays him as a true hero of the people.

From the story, Gilgamesh, the protagonist, demonstrates many character traits that pass him for a hero. Gilgamesh demonstrates high skillfulness in his work. Besides, he is intelligent and possesses great courage.

The fact that Gilgamesh is ready to die for the sake of his people, also shows that he is selfless, a character of a true hero. From the story therefore, it is in order to argue that Gilgamesh's search for immortality is suitably heroic as developed in this paper.

To begin with, it is quite evident that throughout the story, Gilgamesh demonstrates his character as a leader with high skillfulness. According to Kovacs Gilgamesh " is strong to perfection...an awesome beast with unmatched strength and a chant that fosters armies...leads his tribe into battle fearlessly and defeats everyone..." (8).

Gilgamesh, as a skilful warrior, leads fellow warriors of his tribe to fight their enemies and in no occasion do they lose a battle. His strength is unrivalled; he has been able to slay even the most feared men like the highly feared Humbaba. In fact, his successful demonstration that he could fight Humbaba makes people of Uruk village to fear him for such act is a great achievement.

The task he accomplishes by slaying Humbaba has made the Great Gilgamesh to cower since his strength is incomparable to someone who was

once their king. The revelation that the people of his tribe are angered by even small things just but demonstrates their confidence in Gilgamesh; they are confident that even if they go to fight with any tribe, their king will not let them down.

Gilgamesh is a man of great intelligence; throughout his reign as a king, he demonstrates great intelligence through the way he governs his people.

He naturally possesses hindsight of what is likely to happen to his people and prepares in advance to overcome it. Besides, Gilgamesh has the ability to make wise decisions on urgent matters concerning his people (Heather Para. 9). This ability has earned his tribe a good name; a powerful tribe.

By accepting to challenge Humbaba, Gilgamesh knows he could convince his people that he is strong and powerful and could actually slay the beast. It takes intelligence for an individual to look up and heed the counsel of the wise and for Gilgamesh he heeded his mother's words of wisdom; Gilgamesh's mother convinces him that Enkidu is a true friend not an enemy in disguise.

The epic portrays Gilgamesh as a selfless man. Being selfless is one of the characters that people do admire in a hero. Selflessness as a character trait that " requires an individual to put his/her personal needs aside to care for other people's needs even if it requires a sacrifice that would not benefit him/her" (Prine 23).

By agreeing to fight Humbaba, Gilgamesh verily knows that it is possible that he may die during the fight; nevertheless, his selfless character compels him

to take the risk and the fact that he is ready to die for his people's safety passes him for a true hero. Only few people can give their lives for the sake of others and this move by Gilgamesh qualifies him as a true hero.

His selfless nature also comes out when he fights the sky sent-bull (earthquake). When an earthquake hits his tribe, nine dozen people die but Gilgamesh does not flee to save his life; he simply stays put because he knows his people need him at a time like this. The earthquake incident further reveals his selfless nature as a true hero.

Finally, Gilgamesh demonstrates high degree of courage that portrays him as a hero. His acceptance to fight Humbaba, a great fighter, shows great courage because he does not fear death, which is a possible outcome from this fight. His courageous nature comes out when he manages to climb up the steep cliff on Mt. Mashu.

He does not cower midway but goes up until he reaches the top of the cliff. At the top, Gilgamesh meets the scorpion guard who reveals to him that in the past, no one had ever climbed to the top of that cliff. This revelation by the scorpion guard further brings out the courageous nature of Gilgamesh; he manages to do what no other man has done before and that's what true heroes do; they go where no ordinary man has ever gone.

From the epic, it is evident that Gilgamesh's search for immortality is suitably heroic because his character throughout the story demonstrates that he is indeed a hero. Many at times he has done things that underscore his courageous nature. As a leader, Gilgamesh shows great intelligence. In

the battle field, Gilgamesh is a skilful warrior. Finally he is a selfless man ready to die for his people's safety.

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