

Personal transformation from gilgamesh to chihiro

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Personal Transformation from Gilgamesh to Chihiro Regardless of the setting and the time, maturity and development are key processes that reshape individual's character. Although on the surface, Hayao Miyazaki's film, *Spirited Away* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* have nothing in common based on their different historical and geographical settings, they are tied together by the genre called "Bildungsroman". A genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood, also known as a coming of age novel.

The film, *Spirited Away*, is about Chihiro, a young girl who is taken down an unusual road by her parents while moving to a new home in an unfamiliar town. Their curiosity leads them into what appears to be an abandoned amusement park. As they explore, they come across an unattended foodstand and the parents help themselves; later as the sun sets, they are transformed into pigs by some sort of sorcery. Chihiro is left alone to figure out how to free her parents and escape this unknown world. Thankfully, she finds companionship in a boy named Haku who guides her through the obstacles she has to face along the way.

The Epic of Gilgamesh begins in a similar manner as *Gilgamesh*, the king of Uruk appears to be an unfit leader for his city. As the city continues to resent their leader, the gods of Uruk decide to create Enkidu, a companion and diversion for Gilgamesh. Immediately after their friendship begins, Gilgamesh's selfish character is transformed into one of a more giving and gracious leader. These personal transformations interconnect the two stories that appear to be unrelated at first glance. The most essential similarity

between The Epic of Gilgamesh and Spirited away is the companionship they find which begins their transformation.

Without their companions, neither Chihiro nor Gilgamesh would be able to overcome their obstacles and develop into stronger characters. As the abandoned amusement park turns into a spirit world upon nightfall, Chihiro meets a young boy named Haku. Having been in her place previously, he instructs her on what to do in order to survive within this world and eventually save her parents. He guides her to the bathhouse for the millions of Shinto Gods that inhabit this spirit world. Following Haku's instructions enables her to find Yubaba who can give her the job she will need to stay live and function. Through her stay there, she discovers that Haku is actually a dragon under the employ of the evil witch Yubaba, who provided her with a job as well. She is able to free him along with herself as she realizes that Haku is actually a river spirit she fell into as a child. Haku responds with excitement after she tells him, " You did it, Chihiro! I remember! I was the spirit of the Kahaku River" (Miyazaki). She not only liberates him at this moment, but she completes her process of adulthood and finding a way home for herself.

Chihiro began her journey through the spirit world simply looking for a way out, yet she was able to accomplish a lot more. None of it being possible without her guide, Haku. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh finds a similar friendship within his wild equal, Enkidu. Enkidu's companionship is essential in order for Gilgamesh's character to develop. Enkidu's greatest effect on Gilgamesh's nature occurs upon his death. Until the death of his only friend,

Gilgamesh thought of himself as invincible and immortal. With Enkidu's demise, Gilgamesh falls into a state of misery and realizes what he must do.

He states, " How can I keep silent, how can I stay quiet? My friend, whom I loved, has turned to clay. Shall I not be like him, and also lie down, never to rise again, through all eternity" (Epic of Gilgamesh 78)? Witnessing his friend die made Gilgamesh realize his fear of death and he therefore sets on a journey to find Uta-napishti, who has discovered the secret to immortality. Instead of returning to his old selfish ways, he takes on a quest to defeat fate. Once he reaches Uta-napishti, he is presented with a plant which grants youth upon the owner, even though he fails the test of staying awake for a week.

On his journey home however, a snake retrieves the plant. Gilgamesh fails in his journey to defeat his fate, yet comes upon him a sense of humility and acceptance of his true destiny. He returns home to serve Uruk and its citizens. With the help of their companions, the main characters must overcome a series of obstacles before they can discover their full potential. In the beginning of the story, Chihiro is a spoiled child forced into the fantastic world. Chihiro becomes completely separated from everything she has known and must find her way back to reality.

Her adult guidance is stripped away from her when her parents are turned into pigs after being greedy and eating plenty of food that did not belong to them. Chihiro is then forced to step up and save her own parents: " I'm sorry my sister turned your parents into pigs, but there's nothing I can do. It's just the way things are. You'll have to help your parents and Haku by yourself" (Miyazaki). Never having been cast such responsibility, Chihiro does a pretty

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good job. In order to survive in the spirit world, Chihiro takes a job at the bath house run by Yubaba.

There she performs hard tasks most kids her age would not be able to grasp. Chihiro taking a job is a first step into her reaching adulthood, as providing an income and hard work are grown up responsibilities. While she is working there, she faces some difficult challenges which the other workers could not handle. The first occurrence is when a creature in similar appearance to that of a stink god enters the bathhouse. The employees try to tell him to turn around, but when he ignores them and continues his way into the bathhouse, Chihiro is faced with the responsibility of cleaning him.

The creature turns out to really be a River God polluted with garbage, and Chihiro is able to cure him by pulling out a bike and letting the other garbage spill out. Soon after, a spirit known as No-Face becomes a glutton, eating everything in the bathhouse. Chihiro saves the day again making him spit out all the creatures he ate and returning to his true form. Both times Chihiro was faced with challenges none of the other workers could handle. Both times, she was able to use her logic to fix the problems at hand. These obstacles forced Chihiro to grow up more quickly, as well as let her realize her true potential.

Gilgamesh must make his way through hurdles as well in order to accomplish the effects of Chihiro. After meeting Enkidu, he begins this transformation by destroying two beasts. The first is Humbaba, whom Gilgamesh and Enkidu travel to the forest of Cedar to destroy. After they succeeded, the goddesses Ishtar was impressed by Gilgamesh and offers him marriage. Knowing the history of her previous husbands, however, Gilgamesh refused. Angered at

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his refusal, Ishtar summoned a Bull to destroy Gilgamesh. He is able to overcome the bull, only marking the beginning of his metamorphosis.

Soon after these events, his companion Enkidu dies and Gilgamesh takes on another mission. He goes on a journey to find the secret to immortality as he begins to strongly fear death after seeing what happened with his friend, Enkidu. He believes Uta-napishti, who lives on the other side of the world, holds the answers: " I thought, ' I will find Uta-napishti the Distant, of whom men tell' and I wandered journeying through every land. Many times I passed through terrible mountains, many times I crossed and recrossed all the oceans. " (Epic of Gilgamesh 85)? Uta-napishti presents him with a plant that will bestow youth upon the owner.

On his way home, however, a snake snatches the plant, leaving Gilgamesh disappointed as he realizes he will never seize what he has so long struggled for. It is this loss that helps him realize what he should do next, which is to reign as the best king he possibly can. While the obstacles Chihiro and Gilgamesh had to face in order to complete their transformation differed in nature, they helped them mature into adults and realize their potential. The last aspect of a transformation, and perhaps the most important is the realization gained through the difficult tasks one had to face.

Characters in both Spirited Away and The Epic of Gilgamesh become more aware that the actions they take affect other people around them as well and therefore they should make decisions that benefit them and the surrounding communities. In the opening scene of Spirited Away, Chihiro's main concern is losing the friends she is leaving behind by moving to a new home. When she enters the spirit world and her parents are turned into pigs,
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she has bigger problems to take care of first. Although she takes the job at the bathhouse to help herself and her parents, she ends up saving the bathhouse itself from destruction twice.

Chihiro also helps her companion Haku as she remembers his name and is able to relieve him from the spirit world. Through her journey into adulthood, Chihiro learns to make decisions that benefit her, as well as others. Gilgamesh gains similar lessons in the Epic of Gilgamesh. After all the obstacles Gilgamesh overcame to gain the plant of youth, a snake simply snatched it away. Gilgamesh sat down and wept for the plant, but through his tears he finally grasped that his mistake was to fear death in the first place.

Immortality is not meant for humans, and Gilgamesh then realized that instead of chasing it, he should return to his king duties just as Uta-napishti suggested: " Let him cast off his pelts, and the sea bear them off, let his body be soaked till fair! Let a new kerchief be made for his head, let him wear royal robes, the dress fitting his dignity" (The Epic of Gilgamesh 97). Gilgamesh returns to Uruk after accepting the fact he is mortal and he should be a great leader to his citizens. The text does not reveal what happens to Gilgamesh after he gets back to Uruk.

However, based on his change of character throughout the epic, a judgment can be made on how he will rule as king. He has faced and accepted the harsh reality that humans cannot have power over everything and completed his transformation. Spirited Away and The Epic of Gilgamesh seem completely unrelated at first glance due to their difference in historical and geographical setting. However, when looked at more closely, the main <https://assignbuster.com/personal-transformation-from-gilgamesh-to-chihiro/>

characters experience similar psychological and moral growth into adulthood. The transformations of both Chihiro and Gilgamesh first begin when they find companionship.

Chihiro finds hers within a young boy named Haku, who guides her to survive within the spirit world. He points her to Yubaba, an evil witch who gives her a job at the bathhouse. While Chihiro is working there, she has to face the monsters that invade and pose a threat the bathhouse, a task the adult workers could not handle themselves. After overcoming these obstacles, she is able to save herself and her fellow companion Haku from the spirit world. Gilgamesh began his journey similarly as he was a selfish tyrant highly disliked by the public.

When he meets his natural equal, Enkidu, his life is forever changed. The two work together and become really close friends. At the peak of their friendship however, Enkidu dies and Gilgamesh embarks on a journey to find immortality. When his journey fails, he realizes that it is not in his power to have everlasting youth, but instead he has the capability to be a great king. He returns to his home city of Uruk transformed into a stronger leader. Both characters, Chihiro and Gilgamesh began their journeys as selfish and misguided individuals, but were able to reach their full potential in the end.