

First & Last Name

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World Literature

23 January 2008

Gilgamesh and Young Hollywood: Selfish and Searching for Immortality

Gilgamesh is a tale of a character both man and god who is selfish and ungrateful for the life given to him. His people disliked him so much they sent for someone, Enkidu, to teach him a lesson and change him into a better person. In society today, young Hollywood seems to be filled with characters who think themselves godlike and who do not do things that show appreciation towards the lives they have been given. They too may receive help from people who want to teach them how to be better people. Gilgamesh and some members of young Hollywood share similarities in their actions, in their character, and in their lifestyles that make it easy to relate the two.

To begin, the actions of Gilgamesh throughout the story and how he handles certain situations can be compared to the actions of young stars today. Gilgamesh is a selfish leader being described by his people saying, "his arrogance has no bounds by day or night. No son is left with his father, for Gilgamesh takes them all, even the children" (*Gilgamesh* 13). The people also point out that, "his lust leaves no virgin to her lover, neither the warrior's daughter nor the wife of the noble" (*Gilgamesh* 13). All of this is evidence that Gilgamesh is a leader who takes simply because he has the power to and sees himself as invincible on many accounts. When looking at some of the young stars doing well in the Hollywood scene in America, some of the same actions are easily spotted. These young stars believe themselves to be incapable of being

affected by things in the ways that everyday people are. For example, they use drugs regularly and drink in great amounts while partying all night dismissing all consequences. They take all of the chances they get to use their fame and power to their best interests while sometimes overlooking the fact that their money and fame could be put to better use if given back to the people. While Gilgamesh may rob the community of what it finds to be important such as its women and sons, these stars are robbing America of its wholesome image and good influences for its children. Both Gilgamesh and these stars are without shame, using their power to take and take for their own benefit while disregarding those around them.

In addition to similarities in actions, young stars and Gilgamesh share similarities in their character. The story says that, “when the gods created Gilgamesh they gave him a perfect body, Shamash the glorious sun endowed him with beauty, Adad that god of the storm endowed him with courage, the great gods made his beauty perfect, surpassing all others, terrifying like a great wild bull. Two thirds they made him god and one third man” (*Gilgamesh* 13). The people see Gilgamesh as a walking example of perfection and yet he is also part man, which makes them feel that they can relate to him in some way. The fact that he is part man makes him seem more attainable and less intimidating in a way. The gods may have intended this to make him a better leader, however, Gilgamesh did not use this to his advantage. Similarly, celebrities are often viewed as the people in our society with perfect bodies and unattainable beauty. Celebrities are watched constantly by people and reported on regularly in all types of magazines and television shows. In a way, celebrities are godlike and are held at a higher level than the common person living in America. They have money in unfathomable amounts and get special attention and perks all the time. Like Gilgamesh, the fact that they are real people is something that they could

use to their advantage in making people see we are all alike and anyone can be successful, however, they too do not use this advantage and tend to allow themselves to be on a pedestal.

Gilgamesh takes chances regardless of the consequence throughout the story. No matter what Enkidu advises him to do, he wants to be fearless and do whatever he must. He kills the Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven without reasoning any consequence. The unfortunate consequence was that, “because they have killed the Bull of Heaven, and because they have killed Humbaba who guarded the Cedar Mountain one of the two must die” (*Gilgamesh* 26). Similarly, the youngest stars in Hollywood take risks such as this a lot in the media. They take drugs that could kill them or put them in a position to kill others. They drink and they drive without ever taking into consideration what consequences they may suffer. Young celebrities like Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, Lindsey Lohan, and Mischa Barton are being jailed for DUI offenses and drug possessions far too often to shed any evidence that they thought out their actions before they did anything. Like Gilgamesh, they want to use their power and authority and do things that prove them to be fun, fearless people who should be envied. They let the fame go to their heads and become out of control. It isn't until someone close to them in the industry dies that they take a moment to think about what they are doing. For example, the recent drug related death of Heath Ledger has opened eyes to many in Hollywood yet again the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. This is a lot like how Gilgamesh did not truly understand how selfish and terrible he had been until his brother and dear friend Enkidu had to die.

Lastly, the lifestyles of both Gilgamesh and young celebrities are similar in many ways. Both are accustomed to the extravagant and to the best qualities of everything in life. Being part god, Gilgamesh enjoys the luxuries of being able to seek out immortality and has the strength and ability to fight off challenges that normal men could not. Being godlike in society,

celebrities are used to the best of the best in all aspects of life and can get away with doing things that normal people could not get away with in everyday life. Sometimes it looks as though celebrities, too, are chasing after immortality otherwise they would not expose themselves to such situations and expect to come out unharmed. When something is wrong with celebrities in young Hollywood, especially when it deals with their appearance, it is questioned and talked about by many people. When Gilgamesh searches for immortality after Enkidu's death, people who see him ask, "If you are Gilgamesh, why are your cheeks so starved and your face drawn? Why is despair in your heart and your face like the face of one who has made a long journey? Yes, why is your face burned with heat and cold, and why do you come here, wandering over the wilderness in search of the wind?" (*Gilgamesh* 34). Like people in America do, the people have an idea of what godlike people should look like and are surprised to see that Gilgamesh looks like he is suffering from the same toils and troubles that a common person would experience. Young celebrities are asked these questions all the time when they look or act differently or show the weaknesses of the common person because common people believe that they have the capability to be happy and well at all times.

In conclusion, Gilgamesh is like a celebrity in so many aspects. He is supposed to be a leader and yet uses his power in ways that a leader should not. Both celebrities and Gilgamesh suffer hardships as results of their lifestyle and attitudes towards others. At the end of Gilgamesh's story, he is coming closer to understanding how to cherish and appreciate what he has been given in life. Young celebrities are going to rehabilitation centers and counseling to try to better themselves but both Gilgamesh and celebrities have to be constantly reminded of how lucky they are in order to remain good and successful leaders and influences.