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EQ Abstract

The De-Structuring of the Hero

Through the discussion of several texts, the class has discussed the archetype of the hero, in my paper I would like to discuss what a hero is? Upon exploring the idea of what a hero is I will explore the two sides of the hero as it pertains to our classroom discussion, whether or not the hero is being de-structured in the following three texts, *Gilgamesh*, *Watchmen*, and *The Power and the Glory*. By being de-structured I mean to say that are the heroes being presented as un-heroic, even villainous to the extent of some situations. Despite my own biased opinion, and the same opinion the class seems to present in discussion of this issue, the two sides are conflicting enough to provide an array of issues in the respective plots.

In determining what a hero is I would have to explore how several are portrayed in the three readings. This is a divided question among with two sides in itself. For the positive rendition there is no pure model of a hero, perhaps Nite Owl and Laurie as the Silk Spectre could pose as good models. They each have the heroic, noble qualities of the typical image of a hero; yet at the same time have a realistic background to their behavior in the graphic novel. Even the Whiskey Priest has these nobler qualities in adhering to his duty, despite the immense danger he is placed in by the Red Shirts' persecution. To a sense as a martyr the priest is a hero, but differs slightly from Rorschach, which may be a nice analysis between the two that I would like to make. However, for this section I would reserve to talk only how their positive, redeeming factors make them heroic, such as Rorschach's sense of justice, a problematic one to work with.

However on the negative perception of what a hero is I could explore the isolation of men like Ozymandias or Dr. Manhattan. Both of these characters had a certain interest in humanity in

mind, but their actions seem to have been in the best interest through unjust means. Also Gilgamesh is introduced as a scourge to his people, having sexual encounters with newlywed brides, and using his partial god-like powers for ignoble reasons. Once again I can explore the negative side of men like the Whiskey Priest and Rorschach in this section, taking their negative qualities and arguing that they are not heroic. These would include the Whiskey Priest momentarily lapse of duty, during his affair with Maria that led to a daughter, or his alcoholism.

Once providing a nice foundation on what a hero is, I would declare a stance so I can proceed to the second question of whether the archetype of the hero is being de-structured. The affirmative stance would allow for me to declare that these characters actions are changing the perception of the hero, but in the light that the characters seem more realistic. Through a conflicting set of morals, or ethical line, these characters come across as more realistic, and presented the flaws of humanity properly. These superhuman beings in *Watchmen* specifically are being presented as no different from the ordinary people who read the series. However, Gilgamesh is being de-structured into a similar character, which commits as evil acts as he does benevolent ones, however, his benevolent actions are fueled by some ulterior motive.

The other stance would argue that the hero is not being de-structured and would rely heavily on the superhuman abilities of Dr. Manhattan to explain the archetype is still valid. This argument would be difficult to use the Whiskey Priest, as he is probably the most ordinary of the array of characters. Asserting what a hero is I would claim that Gilgamesh and the *Watchmen* exemplify the heroic figure of physical prowess and abilities that make them heroes. This area is probably where the most work will need to be done.