

1997

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### Recommended Citation

Williamsen, Elizabeth (1997) "The Search for Identity in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*," *Articulāte*: Vol. 2 , Article 3.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/articulate/vol2/iss1/3>

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## THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN THE *EPIC OF GILGAMESH*

ELIZABETH WILLIAMSEN '99

Dr. Carl G. Jung's theory of individuation can be described as the emergence of a hidden, more complete personality through gradual changes within the conscious and unconscious halves of the human psyche. These changes occur most prominently at periods of stress in an individual's life, such as puberty or "mid-life crisis." The changes can also occur through a person's relationships with others, which can cause intense anxiety or intense contentment. The Sumerian-Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* can be interpreted as a demonstration of the ways in which interpersonal relations can bring about a more satisfying relationship with the Self.

A deep and binding love for another human being is a beautiful thing. A friendship based on such a love should be a goal for each individual, no matter where, how, or when he/she lives. Forty-seven centuries ago, two men shared such a bond. Gilgamesh the king of Uruk and Enkidu the wild man of the plains were joined by a friendship whose strength was destined to change each of their lives.

In the modern world, characterized as it is by homophobia and paranoia, many might look askance at such an exclusive friendship between two men. In the course of history, and the course of mythological study, Gilgamesh and Enkidu's friendship has been characterized as a loving homosexual relationship, a temporary homosexual experiment, and an example of male bonding as it should be done: confine the women to the kitchen and frolic in the wilderness like "real men."

In Will Roscoe's opinion, Gilgamesh and Enkidu's relationship is an assertion of male superiority through same-sex love. They reject women completely, preferring each other's (male) company. Although Sumerian society appears to have been patrilineal, women were important religious figures and their sexuality was celebrated in ceremonies and literature (Roscoe 169). In fact, "Eanna / Our

holy ground" (I.i.10-11 Jackson 2), Ishtar's temple, and thus by association the goddess herself, is mentioned in the epic long before any male god. The rejection of women by the two men can easily be seen as a rebellion against female power, and an attempt to overcome the feelings of inferiority caused by that power: "Men's power over women is based on the bonds that men have with each other, their willingness to aid and support each other in asserting their superiority over women" (Roscoe 171).

Gilgamesh feels the power conflicts between men and women even before his meeting with Enkidu. He rules over Uruk, but the fertility goddess Ishtar, apparently the most important deity of the city (as would seem most appropriate in an agricultural community), rules over him. In defiance against her power, and synonymously, her sexuality, he seeks domination over mortal women: he "hoards the girls of other men / for his own purpose" (I.ii.56-57 Jackson 3). This form of retaliation, while probably very physically satisfying for Gilgamesh, is not successful, since by enjoying female sexuality, he only empowers his enemy. The people of the city call upon the gods to remedy the situation, for Gilgamesh is not the king he should be:

"Is this the shepherd of Uruk's flocks,  
our strength, our light, our reason,  
who hoards the girls of other men  
for his own purpose?" (I.ii.54-57 Jackson 3)

In response, the gods ask Aruru, goddess of creation, to create another man, Enkidu,  
". . . in the  
image of Gilgamesh . . .  
as quick in heart and as strong in arm  
so that these counterforces might first engage,  
then disengage, and finally let Uruk's children

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live in peace." (I.ii.71-76 Jackson 4)

The wild man is born of a lump of clay, feeds upon the grasses of the steppe, and runs with the wild herds. His animal nature is totally at odds with the civilization and culture which Gilgamesh represents. They are opposites, yet divine mandate has declared them to be equals. The two are destined to become one, but Enkidu must first be educated in the ways of men.

Enkidu is more animal than man; he has "neither clan nor race;" "tirelessly does he roam across the land . . . / he eats the food of beasts" (I.ii.86, I.iii.104-105 Jackson 4, 6). He is accepted by the animal herds as one of their own; however, he demonstrates human intellect in his defiance and methodical destruction of the hunters' traps (Wolff 4). The hunter who observes him, as a civilized being, cannot accept the thought of a human living like an animal, and seeks to bring him to the city. To aid him in this, he recruits a temple prostitute.

Rivkah Kluger points out that the seduction of Enkidu by the courtesan demonstrates specific intent. Enkidu's destiny is not merely to be shown off like a freak of nature; it is important that he become initiated into civilization. The prostitute's mission is to "bring him closer to the human, to bring him to Uruk" (45). As with those animals who will cease to care for their offspring after the young have been touched by human hands, Enkidu's herd no longer recognizes him as an animal after the seven days he spends in the arms of the harlot. John Tigue sees Enkidu's sexual encounter

as a social becoming. He is furthering his independence from the cthonic kingdom and entering into the paternal "civilized world." The first sexual experience is always a turning point in people's lives (sic). (60)

Enkidu feels the difference in himself and returns to the courtesan, the cause of the change, for advice on dealing with the change.

The prostitute can be seen as Enkidu's anima figure. Before his encounter with her, he was a gross exaggeration of manhood in his animalism. After femininity is revealed to him, he discovers the feminine qualities in himself; he is already at one with nature, and he relies much on his instincts, both stereotypically feminine characteristics. When he returns to listen to her words, she becomes "a higher anima," a sort of "teacher" (Kluger 46). The "woman is the bridge or mediator [as Enkidu crosses from "non-manhood (whether animality, childhood, or adolescence) into manhood], seen here in her familiar aspects of mother (in that she leads, clothes,

feeds, teaches), subservient female . . . and whore" (Wolff 5). Because he is willing to listen to his anima, Enkidu readily assimilates his feminine qualities, easily balancing them with those of his masculine side.

It is actually this balance that some critics have used to further their arguments of a homosexual relationship between Enkidu and Gilgamesh. Enkidu's feminine qualities are emphasized to underscore his integrated self-image; he is described in several cases as a woman, especially in Gilgamesh's first two dreams: in the first, "[Gilgamesh] . . . embraced [him], / as a man does the woman he loves best" (I.v.244-245 Jackson 11), and in the later dream he bends toward the axe symbolizing Enkidu "with manly interest; / so fair was its appearance / that it seemed wholesome, young and / ready as a woman" (II.i.15-18 Jackson 15). Enkidu's rage upon hearing that Gilgamesh is about to deflower another man's bride has been construed as the anger of a jealous lover (or pre-lover, in this instance, as the two men have yet to meet); the wild man challenges the king to a wrestling match (which has been interpreted as a metaphor for homosexual intercourse), that ends in a draw, with each man respecting the other's prowess.

"Then Enkidu and Gilgamesh joined in sacred  
friendship and sealed their solemn  
bond with noble kiss." (III.i.1-3 Jackson 20)

Following the pattern indicated by many of his earlier assertions, William Doty also suggests that the missing text that follows this kiss "may have described a homosexual union, and hence was excised" (78).

Whether Enkidu serves as a model of a balanced psyche or a homosexual temptation matters little. Robert Hopcke offers a beautiful rationalization of male femininity:

[T]o be in relationship to oneself as a man means fundamentally to both acknowledge and celebrate a kind of homosexuality, an enjoyment of one's own manhood as a man; this enjoyment is anathema in a patriarchal society whose dominant values and social structures are organized along heterosexual lines. (101)

At one with his own psyche, Enkidu meets Gilgamesh and proves the prophetic words of the prostitute, who instilled in Enkidu a feeling of destiny by telling him that Gilgamesh had already dreamt of his coming (I.v.231-233 Jackson 11). Kluger states that a very important part of the process of individuation is just such a feeling of destiny, a belief that something is meant to be (47). Enkidu's

belief in this friendship as his fate spurs him onward in his journey to Uruk. The prostitute has given him the boost in self-esteem he needs in order to discover himself, and later to help Gilgamesh in his own process of self-realization (Kluger 49).

Gilgamesh, at this point in the epic, is rather an unruly ruler, and his subjects have been forced to call on the gods for help. As with any hero, his spiritual development is incomplete, and he is destined to search for the completing factor (Van Nortwick 11). Much of his trouble may be caused by his partial divinity. His birth has made him heir to two worlds, but he belongs to neither. Below the rank of god, he is still too powerful to form relationships among mortals. He is an outcast in his own city, where he is unable to balance his roles as "simultaneously a powerful individual and a functionary of society" (Wolff 63). The introduction of Enkidu, who was specifically created to be Gilgamesh's equal, opens a new way of life to the king.

Enkidu is a shadow figure, a perfect foil for Gilgamesh. The cthonic man who recently ran with the herds represents all those qualities not possessed by the city-dwelling king (Van Nortwick 21), including the feminine qualities he gained from his encounter with his anima. Gilgamesh, the more powerful, dominant, and masculine of the two, turns Enkidu toward his own way of life, rather than immediately absorbing his newfound brother's path to individuation. He molds the wild man into all a civilized man should be: a warrior.

Gilgamesh has made himself into the perfect warrior-hero. He is unsurpassed in strength and skill with weaponry; he has the ability to overcome any opponent "by wit or force or fear" (I.i.23 Jackson 2). With Enkidu as companion, he can take the final step: without strong friendship, a man must look to marriage for fulfillment (Doty 76). However, an effective warrior must be without familial ties; no one must be wounded by a warrior's injuries but the warrior himself. Women, marriage, and family belong to a different life than that sought by Gilgamesh (Wolff 8-9), especially since he must struggle against female sexuality for power in the city. How better to display his rejection of female power than by completely rejecting all women? With Enkidu at his side, this will not be such a lonely course of action. Gilgamesh can cease to molest and rape young women; instead he can embark on heroic adventures with his newly-discovered second self.

Gilgamesh suddenly feels the urge to conquer Huwawa/Humbaba, the guardian of the Cedar Forest. In the narrative, no

real reason lies behind this desire; it is simply the warrior's urge to exert dominion over another, although in some translations Huwawa/Humbaba has somehow made himself vaguely offensive to Shamash, Gilgamesh's patron god. If so, the quest can be seen as an attempt by Gilgamesh to "atone with the Father," represented here by the sun-god who guides and aids the king in his adventure (in traveling outside the protective confines of the city, Gilgamesh passes from the realm of the Mother to that of the Father, and he must endeavor to pass the initiation trial the sun-god has set for him) (Campbell 136). The episode can be interpreted more deeply as the city-dweller's desire to overpower nature, to force conformity with the values of civilization; this same nature/culture polarity can also be read as female/male, understanding that the female represents impulse and nature, while the male represents logic and ordered civilization. Thomas Van Nortwick also sees the journey to the Cedar Forest as "postponing adult responsibility in favor of an adolescent brand of male bonding" (21). Tighe's reading of the venture is a "psychological break with tradition, custom, and human law, all of which [Gilgamesh] has spurned and conquered in one way or another" (61). The city can also represent the known universe, both physically and psychologically, while the wilderness into which the friends venture is the undiscovered territory.

Enkidu must become the guide on this foray, as he is the man of nature, and Gilgamesh is little more than a raw youth when it comes to surviving outside the city. The feminine qualities in Enkidu become less pronounced as the necessary violence of survival in the natural world claims control of his mind. We can see the conflict between nature and culture exemplified in the attitudes of the two men toward this little excursion. Gilgamesh sees the conquest of the monster as "part of a larger vehicle for getting status in the culture" (Van Nortwick 22), but Enkidu considers it a fight for survival. His animal instincts are the driving force behind all the decisions he makes on the journey.

Gilgamesh, unused to a quest of this sort, and, more deeply, uneasy about what he might discover on this journey into the unconscious, shows signs of uncertainty, expressing worries about the value of their mission and voicing disturbing dreams. Their positions have been reversed: previously, Enkidu had felt anxieties about dying in battle with the monster; Gilgamesh had replied that all mortals are destined to die, but only heroic men of action can live on through the glory of their deeds (III.iv.57-63 Jackson 22). Now it is Enkidu who reassures his brother:

"Brother, your song is a fine omen.  
This dream will make you well.  
Brother, that vision you saw is rich  
for on that mountain top  
we can capture Humbaba and  
hurl his earthly form from  
towering cliffs through sky to  
earth . . ." (V.iii.17-24 Jackson 29)

Enkidu's positive interpretation of the first dream is as steadying as Enkidu himself; the deep love Gilgamesh feels for his second self is a stabilizing factor in his life, allowing him to depart from his previous "berserker" existence (Doty 80).

Marked differences still appear between the two men's personalities; Gilgamesh has not yet learned to incorporate into his own psyche those qualities that give Enkidu his spiritual completeness. Enkidu, on this journey, has actually reverted somewhat to his former animalistic, survivalist tendencies. When the two warriors bring Humbaba to his knees in defeat, he begs them to spare his life, offering in exchange his lumber and his servitude. Enkidu urges the monster's death, saying, "Kill the beast now, Gilgamesh. Show / no weak or silly mercy toward so sly a foe" (V.vi.75-76). Gilgamesh, civilized, believes that reducing the monster to helplessness is proof enough of his superiority; Enkidu, more the animal, lusts for death (Van Nortwick 22). Humbaba is beheaded forthwith. While it may be true in this case that the recipient of mercy may later seek revenge for his subordination, Enkidu was once in such a situation himself: in their first fight, Enkidu was brought to one knee, but Gilgamesh spared his life; if Gilgamesh had acted then with the ruthlessness Enkidu now urges, the wild man would never have survived.

The two men return triumphant to Uruk, bearing their trophy of cedar wood. When Gilgamesh has washed the gore of battle from himself, the goddess Ishtar becomes enamored of him and presents an proposal of marriage. She offers him the godlike status which he has apparently been seeking in his physical quests:

"Come to my home, most sweetly scented of all places,  
where holy faces wash your feet with tears as  
do the priests and priestesses of gods like Anu.  
All mighty hands of kings and queens  
will open doors for you." (VI.16-20 Jackson 33)

Having rejected women as irrelevant to the life of a warrior (Wolff 9), Gilgamesh refuses the goddess's offer in an appropriately belligerent

manner, going out of his way to remind her of her negative aspects:

"Ishtar's the hearth gone cold,  
a broken door, without the gold;  
.....  
tar that can't be washed away  
.....  
a god's own sandal filled with piss . . ."  
(VI.37-46 Jackson 34)

and then going on to refresh her memory of the various miserable fates of her former lovers. The goddess, justifiably angered, arranges for the bull of heaven to wreak havoc on Gilgamesh's realm.

However, Gilgamesh's rude refusal is almost equally justifiable. In a relationship such as she offers, Ishtar, the female, would hold all power. Gilgamesh, as a mere male (and a mortal at that), would be but a temporary fixture in her home. His male mentality, still trying to believe in its superiority, cannot abide the idea of being replaceable, and there is no chance of his exerting dominance over Ishtar: "[F]emale deities willing to be dutiful wives have not yet been invented" (Roscoe 171). The king's masculinity has not yet connected with his feminine side, and so he fears everything Ishtar represents, especially her sexuality. Ishtar embodies all the negative aspects of the anima: uncontrollable physical lusts, bitchiness, irrationality, selfishness.

If Gilgamesh accepts Ishtar when she is passionate, he would be feeding his hunger for sensual gratification. To reject her so abruptly is to reject the passion within himself and thus to try to deny now this unruly side of himself. (Tighe 67)

Gilgamesh's fear of Ishtar's aggression is about as surprising as her furious response to the hero's insults.

Accordingly, the bull of heaven is released on the unsuspecting citizens of Uruk. Gilgamesh, as their king, must protect them; after all, if his subjects perished, who would he have to rule? Properly heroic, and perhaps recognizing and accepting their own responsibility for the bull's terrorism of the city, the two heroes work together in harmony to physically overcome the corporeal threat posed by the bull. Enkidu, having become endowed with more understanding than his counterpart since his seduction by and connection with his anima, realizes the moment of defying a deity by destroying the bull: "How could we defeat a god? / Brother, I see great challenge here, but can we dare defy such force?" (VI.145-146

Jackson 37-38). However, the heroes join as one and conquer the bull, disemboweling it in celebratory glee. Masculine bonds have proven more powerful than the heavy artillery of Woman (Roscoe 171).

Gilgamesh gains from these two encounters a "sense of self-importance" from identifying himself and seeing the world identify him as

a conqueror of monsters and nature. Unfortunately for him, however, this success suffers a reversal and results in his immediate suffering. True, he has proven his physical prowess, but he has failed miserably at being a person with any common sense or empathy for others. His heroism is strictly physical at this point and will need to be spiritualized if his life is to be meaningful. (Tigue 62).

The importance of physical heroism and all it represents has indeed been overemphasized by the pair. While Gilgamesh converts the bull's horns into sacrificial vessels (to be used in rituals for the benefit of a male deity), Enkidu, caught up in the woman-bashing spirit of the moment, throws the bull's right thigh at Ishtar where she stands shrieking on the wall, informing her that he would tie her with the bull's intestines and destroy her in the same manner (VI.171-174 Jackson 38). The entire episode, in which mere pawns attempted (and succeeded in their venture) to defy the will of the gods, forces the gods to destroy one of the pair.

Enkidu, so in touch with his Self that his dreams need undergo no interpretations, envisions the council of the gods and knows his end is near:

"The gods all gathered round last night  
and Anu told Enlil that one of us should die  
because of what we've done against their names."

.....  
Then Enkidu fell ill and soon lost his full strength.  
(VII.i.2-8 Jackson 41)

Gilgamesh had previously seemed immune to fears of death; on the journey to the Cedar Forest, when Enkidu expressed fears, Gilgamesh laughed the doubts away, saying that all mortals must die, but only heroes will live on through their deeds (III.iv.57-63 Jackson 21-22). By the time his wasting illness hits him, Enkidu has lost his faith in the eternal quality of fame:

"Oh Gilgamesh, some destiny has robbed me  
of the honor fixed for those who die in battle.  
I lie now in slow disgrace, withering day by day,

deprived as I am of the peace that comes to one  
who dies suddenly in a swift clash of arms."

(VII.iv.110-114 Jackson 44)

The impact of his brother's death on Gilgamesh is incredible; this seems to be the first time death has affected him in a personal manner, "the first time he has been struck by the awareness that man has to die and that this applies also to him" (Kluger 159). But perhaps he is mostly affected by the indignity of wasting away in "slow disgrace," when his warrior's way of life dictates that he should perish in battle-glory. Gilgamesh also feels guilt for the part he played in bringing about Enkidu's death, and this causes him to drive himself out of the community (Wolff 12) and

... [wander]  
over barren hills, mumbling to his own spirit:  
"Will you too die as Enkidu did?"  
(IX.i.2-4 Jackson 55)

Without becoming actively suicidal during skirmishes, Gilgamesh, as the perfect warrior, has no way of assuring that he *will* die in combat as befits a warrior-hero. Therefore, he must arrange things so that he will *never* die. Accordingly, he sets off on his quest to locate and learn from Utnapishtim, the only mortal known to have bypassed the path all non-deities must follow into the underworld. This part of the poem depicts Gilgamesh as the "one who goes farther, sees more, than anyone, who cannot be prevented by threats, hardship or kindly and practical advice from reaching his goal of finding out what death is and how to stop it" (Wolff 13). He intends to follow the path of the sun-god and so travels to Mt. Mashu, quite likely the *axis mundi*, through which Shamash makes his nightly journey. His entrance into the utter darkness of the tunnel, the region of the unknown, can be seen as "a kind of spiritual death . . . the feeling of being cut off from the world" (Van Nortwick 27). After traveling through the mountain for eleven hours, he emerges into a new and beautiful land.

Gilgamesh, on entering the tunnel, has symbolically returned to the womb, and his emergence is a sort of rebirth. According to Joseph Campbell,

[t]he hero whose attachment to ego is already annihilate  
passes back and forth across the horizons of the world, in  
and out of the dragon, as readily as a king through all the  
rooms of his house. And therein lies his power to save . .  
(93)

He also notes the (individuated) hero's ability to pass safely by the

guardians at the entrance to the "World Womb, the World Navel" (92). Hence, if Gilgamesh is able to pass by the scorpion creatures at the entrance to the mountain, he must have achieved one-ness within himself. At Enkidu's death, and during his subsequent bonding with nature (Enkidu's native environment), he has absorbed essential qualities of Enkidu's being. "[T]he outcome of grieving is to make the ones we have lost a part of ourselves, to make their attitudes and characteristic behaviors our own" (Roscoe 173). Enkidu's qualities have become integrated into the being of the king, although Gilgamesh himself may not yet know it.

Emerging from the mountain, Gilgamesh comes upon the dwelling of Siduri, an alewife "who gives her men lifesaving drinks" (X.i.13 Jackson 61). She is frightened by his savage appearance until he relates his tale of wandering after the death of "Enkidu, my soul's good half" (X.i.44 Jackson 62). On hearing of his quest for immortality, Siduri, another guiding anima figure, advises him

"Remember always, mighty king,  
that gods decreed the fates of all  
many years ago. They alone are let  
to be eternal, while we frail humans die  
as you yourself must someday do.  
What is best for us to do  
is now to sing and dance.  
Relish warm food and cool drinks.  
Cherish children to whom your love gives life.  
Bathe easily in sweet refreshing waters.  
Play joyfully with your chosen wife.  
It is the will of the gods for you to smile  
on simple pleasures in the leisure time  
of your short days."

(X.iii.88-99 Jackson 63-65)

"She is able to reason upon the various possibilities for her existence and arrive at a sound conclusion. This is something Gilgamesh has yet to learn to do . . ." (Tigue 70). Siduri's is somewhat a voice of civilization, urging Gilgamesh to accept the cultured, mortal life as a prerequisite for the divine. However, if he takes her advice, he will simply regress to the sort of life he led before Enkidu (Kluger 179-180). And yet, his rejection of her suggestions of marriage and children (X.iii.110 Jackson 65) is, while a refusal of mundaneness, is also the same rejection that characterized his identification with the warrior ideal.

Following the alewife's directions, he finds the grove of the

ferryman, and purposelessly attacks and destroys the "Stone Things," which, it turns out, would have facilitated his journey across the waters of death. "It is only by using his [weapon] in a constructive manner, guided by Urshanabi in cutting [a large number of] punting poles for the sea-passage, that he is able to go forward" (Wolff 16). Gilgamesh reaches the island of Utnapishtim, past the waters of death, and explains his quest to the deified man. Utnapishtim, however, is quite unsympathetic, with an apathy smacking of practicality:

"Why cry over fate and nature?  
Chance fathered you. Your conception was  
an accidental combination  
of the divine and mortal.  
I do not presume to know how to help  
the likes of you." (X.v.224-229 Jackson 70)

Gilgamesh asks to at least be given knowledge of how *Utnapishtim* achieved immortality, and is regaled with the story of the flood, prior to which Utnapishtim was warned by a god to take certain life-preserving precautions. Gilgamesh can now see this sage as a man no different from himself; both have their fates decided by the gods, although it would seem that Utnapishtim is the more favored (Wolff 18).

Utnapishtim, as a harsh father-figure, scorns Gilgamesh's desire to attain immortality: "which gods will be called on / to direct your path and future life?" (XI.iv.183-184 Jackson 79). He commands Gilgamesh to withstand an ordeal: the king must stay awake for seven days and nights. Considering how little sleep Gilgamesh has had recently, it is not surprising that he drifts off almost immediately (X.iv.188 Jackson 79). Gilgamesh has effectively been made to die a "symbolic death."

As an immortal hero, Gilgamesh fails, but as the mortal hero he has been throughout the poem, he succeeds: he survives, and in the crafty manner of mortals predicted by the wise man, he tries to pass off his sleep as a mere wink. (Wolff 18-19)

After waking, Gilgamesh realizes that, as a mortal, he is constantly surrounded by death: "My own / bed is where death sleeps and / I crack her spine on every line / where my foot falls" (X.v.220-223 Jackson 80).

Utnapishtim unceremoniously sends Gilgamesh to bathe and redress in clean clothes so that he can return to his city. The mourning period is finished (Van Nortwick 34), his period of awakening is

over; "the moment has been reached at which the hero moves from one stage of his life to the next" (Wolff 20). Utnapishtim's nameless wife, a mother-anima who is willing for Gilgamesh to remain a child (Jacobsen 28), feels compassion for the weary king and persuades him to reveal yet another "special secret, one / that the gods alone do know" (XI.vi.257-258 Jackson 81). The wise man tells Gilgamesh of a magical plant that brings eternal youth. The immortality-seeking king, whose fear of death has only been intensified by his "symbolic death," obtains the plant with little difficulty and embarks on his homeward voyage. As Tigie notices, Gilgamesh takes the plant with him, intending to share it with the "aged men" of his city. This self-extension shows the maturity he has gained from his pilgrimage; he is no longer the selfish ruler of the epic's beginning (64).

On the journey back to Uruk, the triumphant hero stops to bathe in a pool and "a cruel snake slither[s] by / and [steals] the plant from Gilgamesh / who [sees] the snake grow young again" (XI.vi.282-284 Jackson 83). Throughout the second half of the epic, Gilgamesh had been

fleeing death by fleeing old age, even maturity; he [was] reaching back to security and childhood. The loss of the plant stands thus for the loss of the illusion that one can go back to being a child. It brings home the necessity for growing up, for facing and accepting reality. (Jacobsen 29)

His "resignation to the fact of death" (Doty 82) enables Gilgamesh to discover his bonds to other mortals; he has learned "to see himself not as preeminent among men, but as a part of a larger whole, ruled by forces often beyond his ability to control" (Van Nortwick 37). He is ready to return home and devote himself to the success of his community, rather than to personal glory.

The quest for personal immortality as a way of denying the reality of death is an inherent problem in human culture. The Gilgamesh epic attempts to teach the importance of "see[ing] not

those things which separate [us] from other humans, but rather the emblems of [our] essential kinship with all creatures who must die" (Van Nortwick 32). Gilgamesh returns to his city with the ferryman and says,

"Rise up now, Urshanabi, and examine  
Uruk's wall. Study the base, the brick,  
the old design. Is it permanent as can be?  
Does it look like wisdom designed it?" (XI.vi.301-304  
Jackson 84)

Gilgamesh's pride in his work "is no longer that of the ambitious, power-driven ego of the beginning" (Kluger 205). His pride is now in the good work of his people in building the wall and in the thought that the wall will protect the citizens of Uruk for centuries to come.

Enkidu, Gilgamesh's second self, has continued to have an effect on his brother long after the death of his body. The wild man who ran with the herds from birth knew the value of community, and that value is one of those that was unwittingly absorbed by Gilgamesh during the grieving process. Gilgamesh meets his anima through Enkidu's qualities of caring, gentleness, and loyalty. As Van Nortwick suggests, "one part of the self [is] showing the way for another until a final reintegration is possible" (38). This "reintegration" occurs gradually during the heroes' relationship, but the effects do not become fully apparent until Gilgamesh discovers the importance of relating to the world and its inhabitants.

The relationship between Gilgamesh and his companion serves as the ideal toward which Gilgamesh will strive as he begins to interact more fully with his community. The love of these two men also demonstrates a "conception of male wholeness" (Doty 83). Their friendship blossoms into the incomparable radiance of a human being who has achieved individual realization, and who can straddle the border between nature and culture, between mortal and immortal, and between the conscious and the unconscious minds.

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