

Sample book review on the epic of gilgamesh

[Life](#), [Death](#)



The Epic of Gilgamesh is an epic poetry that originates from Mesopotamia. It is among the earliest known literature in Mesopotamia. Many scholars believe that it originated from a series of Sumerian poems, and legends about Gilgamesh who is the protagonist. It is known to be the oldest recorded story in the human history that is over 4000 years old.

The story portrays Mesopotamia's society in the third millennium B. C. E vision of after life. In addition, the story tells shows the reader how the people in Mesopotamia believed in the gods, and offered sacrifices for their prayers to be answered. The people of Uruk cried to the gods to be liberated from the cruelties of Gilgamesh, and they did so by offering sacrifices to the gods. It shows that the people were polytheists as they had different gods representing a different part of nature of physical. The Mesopotamian gods were harsh because they punished those who went against them. An example is when they proclaimed that Enkidu must die as compensation for his actions with Gilgamesh by killing Humbaba, and the Bull of Heaven, and also the chopping of the tallest cedar tree in the Cedar Forest.

The story is about Gilgamesh, a cruel Sumerian leader who led the city of Uruk. Gilgamesh never cared about the people he ruled in fact he treated them so badly. He was half god, and half human and therefore, considered himself very great with no equal. The people of Uruk cried to the gods to set them free from Gilgamesh's oppression by offering sacrifices to the gods. It also talks of the relationship between Gilgamesh who was the ruler of Uruk, and Enkidu his close friend. Enkidu was a wild man who was created by the gods to distract, and stop Gilgamesh from oppressing the citizens of Uruk. The gods created him as Gilgamesh's equal because they were tired of

Gilgamesh's selfishness and cruelty, and the only way to end all these was to create his equal. Together, the two undertake dangerous quests which displeased the gods. They went out to fight obstacles to save the world. In their journey to the Cedar Mountain, they killed the Bull of heaven that the goddess Ishtar had created to punish Gilgamesh for snubbing her advances. Enkidu later on dies, and this affects Gilgamesh so much. Enkidu died of punishment for challenging one of the gods. Gilgamesh feared death especially after his close companion's death, and this led him to embark on a quest for immortality. He was very bitter that only gods can live forever without dying, and he was terrified of death and wanted eternal life. In the end, Gilgamesh in his epic learns that, death is inevitable, and an inescapable fact in human life. The story has a number of themes like the inevitability of death, and immortality is unachievable.

The major theme in the literature work is death, and how it affects the protagonist. The story highlights that death is inevitable, and no one is immortal, not even the king. The theme of death is portrayed by the protagonist, Gilgamesh who had the curiosity about immortality. Gilgamesh feared death, and he could not imagine dying at any time. He says, " Shall I die too? Am I not like Enkidu? Grief has entered my innermost being, I am afraid of Death, and so I roam open country." This is the reason as to why he embarked on a journey to seek eternal life in order to avoid death. The theme of death is inevitable is also shown through Enkidu's death, he was half man and half god just like Gilgamesh, but he still died. After the death of Enkidu, Gilgamesh feared death, and that is the reason he was searching for immortality. Enkidu's death made him realize that, everyone is mortal

although he denied it and decided to challenge it. Gilgamesh attempted to learn the secrets of eternal life by undertaking a perilous journey to meet the immortal flood hero, Utnapishtim. However, in the end, he fails to get eternal life, and this is when he learns that death is inevitable. He learnt the hard way that even the king has to face the reality of death and that; he could do nothing about it. It is through Utnapishtim, Gilgamesh learnt that his quest for immortality is futile. Utnapishtim explained to him that, creation contains the seed of death, and no one can escape it. His quest for eternal life brought many positive changes in his life because he was able to learn about both life, and death. Gilgamesh went back to Uruk knowing that, one's life is not measured by his/her fame and the wealth he /she owns, but by how he treats, and spends time with the people around him. His journey and quest for eternal life made Gilgamesh become a better and selfless leader. After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh could not go back to his normal life; he was filled with fear for the first time in his life. The threat of death in human life was the greatest obstacle in Gilgamesh's house after Enkidu's death. Gilgamesh wondered that if Enkidu was created by the gods as his equal and he has died, could he outrun the fate of all mortals? He was ready to find a way out so that he could escape death. He even built Enkidu's statue to attempt to keep his companion alive and challenge the bounds of mortality. However, the failure of the statue to bring Enkidu back to life puts Gilgamesh in deep depression, and the grief he felt forced him away from his people to look for eternal salvation.

In conclusion, the Epic of Gilgamesh is a chronicle detailing the adventures of Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk. It is about human life, and the power of

myths. The story deals with human pre-occupation with death and trying to challenge it. Gilgamesh feared death after the death of his companion Enkidu and so, he embarks on a journey to search eternal life which he never found. In the end, Gilgamesh learns that death is inevitable and every human being is destined to die; only the gods are immortal. In essence, the story is about the epitome of immortality which has existed and will never change. The story is very important because, it perpetuates that, despite the western influence on life, the essence of the human nature and experience will never change; they will always remain the same. Gilgamesh was a cruel ruler but in the end of the story, he went back to his people a changed person who no longer fought death, and started embracing the life he had with the people around him because he knew that, death was unavoidable. Gilgamesh learnt that, death is inevitability, and immortality is unachievable.