

# Gilgamesh – two-thirds god and one-third human



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At the start of the epic, Gilgamesh is said to be a cruel and ruthless ruler who had no regard for anyone but himself. Gilgamesh is two-thirds God and one-third human- thus being his lineage, he believes as if nobody is equal or above him. On Tablet two, a man said to Enkidu, He will couple with the wife-to-be, / he first of all, the bridegroom after.

/ By divine consent it is so ordained (pg. 15). This quote informs the readers that he would rape men wives on their wedding night. His actions forced his kingdom to resent him. In Sumerian culture, kings were expected to protect the women, not rape them. Kings were expected to act as prominent leaders and rulers. Great rulers put the safety of their people before their own. Gilgamesh was supposed to further enhance the greatness of the kingdom for the well-being of the citizens. The king should have served the people for the sake of his kingdom not help them create a manifestation of hatred within themselves to where they plot against him. Gilgamesh did not treat the civilians with respect or dignity as a king should but instead treated them harshly and like they didn't matter.

The concept of heroism in Sumerian culture is all about service. Service to the kingdom and the people that live in the kingdom. A big concept in all heroic epics is The Hero's Journey. The hero's journey is basically the path the hero goes down to discover who they are and better themselves as a person/leader. It's all about personal growth. In Sumerian culture, there were three distinct qualities that they valued in a hero: bravery, strength, and wisdom.

In the poem, the Sumerian Gods are described as all powerful and are to be worshipped. The Sumerians believe that the earth could not survive without the Gods aiding it. The Sumerians did everything in their power to try not to piss off the Gods because doing so would result in great consequences. They know that the Gods are dangerous. But they also understand that they can be quite helpful. The Gods act like careless children and live how they want too. They have their own set of rules and don't listen to anyone else. One way that the Gods intervene in human affairs was when they created Enkidu. They created him as a mirror image of Gilgamesh with the task to overpower and kill him. Another example on why the Sumerians feared the gods is because if one was to anger one of them bad things would occur. The god who brought upon the flood only created the flood to punish the humans for being too loud and not letting him rest.

The story told us about Gilgamesh's lineage of him being two-thirds a God and one-third human because it makes him who he is. With him being two-thirds God, Gilgamesh felt that he was superior to everyone else, thus making him a ruthless ruler. With this he felt as if he can do anything without repercussions but as this was false. With the information of him being two-thirds god, the readers are given insight to why Gilgamesh is the way he is. Why he acts the way he acts and thinks the way he thinks. This affects his character a great deal because with him thinking this way, he goes down a dark path. He hurts his people and does not act as a good ruler should. One way this affects his character is by him raping women and taking their virtue on the night of their wedding. Gilgamesh was a selfish, mean person who tormented his people.

Women are represented as great power and wisdom, but also great temptation and death. In the story, women appear during the hero's journey, sometimes to be a guide. In other instances, they make women to be overactive, sexually, and fairly misleading. They use their bodies to seduce men so that they may control them. For example, the harlot in Tablet 1 of the Epic of Gilgamesh. She, Shamhat, is sent by Gilgamesh to Enkidu in order to gain control over this wild man named Enkidu. Shamhat lures Enkidu in, telling him: ' You are handsome, [Enkidu, you are like a god,]. Not long after, she seduces him, and he and she spend 6 days and 7 nights together. After this time, Enkidu is no longer just a wild man(133). He begins to learn the ways of regular men, eating bread and drinking ale Shamhat told his was fit for a god and a king. Shamhat's sweet nothings and confidence-building words, soon leads Enkidu from the wilderness, the only home he's ever known, and into the city. Further down the line of time, he even challenges Gilgamesh, the very one who sent the harlot to Enkidu. Shamhat guided Enkidu into a new life, but not before she sexually enticed him with her body. She is a perfect representation of the concept of a woman in the ancient Sumerian culture.

The flood is created by the god Enlil to destroy the earth and all the mortals that walked upon it. He felt that the humans were too loud and annoying. He grew irritated with them and wanted to punish them for it. The god Ea betrayed the other gods and warned Utnapishtim that a great danger was coming. Utnapishtim was the king of Shuruppak, which was a extremely prosperous city on the banks of the Euphrates river. Ea told Utnapishtim to build a boat and aboard it with a seed of every living thing, his family, and

his possessions. The story does not state the reason to why Ea chose Utnapishtim about the flood. But one can conclude that it was because he was favored by the God as only Ea chose him not the group of gods together. One can also guess as to why Utnapishtim was chosen because Ea spoke into the reed walls of Utnapishtim's castle and he overheard him talking about the disastrous flood that is coming.

Enkidu is represented as Gilgamesh's more reasonable and rational side. Enkidu helped Gilgamesh find his heroic side and turned him from a ruthless ruler to a hero. Enkidu was created to help balance and relax Gilgamesh. He was created by the goddess Arura from a hunk of clay in the forest. Enkidu was created to be a mirror image of Gilgamesh has in has the same strength and temper. Enkidu spoke to the harlot: / "" Come, Shamhat, take me away with you/ to the sacred Holy Temple, the residence of Anu and Ishtar,/the place of Gilgamesh, who is wise to perfection,/but who struts his power over the people like a wild bull./ I will challenge him / Let me shout out in Uruk: ' I am the mighty one!'/ Lead me in and I will change the order of things;/ he whose strength is mightiest is the one born in the wilderness!"" (1. 196-204). Before they become bestfriends, their pride and love of power created a feud between the two. Enkidu and Gilgamesh ended up becoming best friends after and Enkidu was the protector of his friend on their adventures and journeys. When Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh is traumatised that he lost his bestfriend but then he starts to question his own future.

A crucial theme that is displayed throughout the poem is mortality. After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh trembled with fear screaming I am going to die!" am I not like Enkidu?!/ Deep sadness penetrates my core,/ I fear death, and <https://assignbuster.com/gilgamesh-two-thirds-god-and-one-third-human/>

now roam the wilderness”/I will set out to the region of Utanapishtim, son of Ubartutu, and will go with utmost dispatch! (9. 2-5). Gilgamesh thought that the only way to overcome his fear was to achieve immortality. He set off to find a man who has done this and learn how he did it. Gilgamesh travels a great deal to track down the mortal man who gained immortality. Death is seen as an impending doom and nobody wants to face it. During his journey, he stumbled upon the very man he was looking for, Utnapishtim.

Utnapishtim then tells him the story of the great flood and how he was given immortality. After hearing the story, Gilgamesh realized that the quality of someones life is not determined by fortune and stature, but the quality of the time he spent with the people around him. Humans come to terms with death when they realized that life is worth appreciating and is all about the people you love surrounding you.