

# Example of essay on comparing gilgamesh and enkidu

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



## **Introduction**

The Epic of Gilgamesh is an account of power, nobility and love centered on the relationship between two mythical characters from Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Gilgamesh, widely considered as largely part-god, was held in high regard by the people of a city he is ruling due to his sheer might but somewhat ill-reputed due to his promiscuity. Enkidu, on the other hand, was created by the gods as a companion to Gilgamesh and first appeared as a ruler of animals in a forest. The meeting of Gilgamesh and Enkidu is considered both intense and fateful, with the both of them becoming best friends and lovers following a fight borne out of their battle for power. This essay seeks to draw comparisons between Gilgamesh and Enkidu, alongside further elaborations about their exploits and their special bond with one another.

## **Examining the Relationship of Gilgamesh and Enkidu**

It is proper to assert from the very beginning that Gilgamesh and Enkidu were lovers. Mesopotamian society at that time did not place any indication of taboo against homosexual relationships and is thus considered natural among men. Such is important to understand the extent to which Gilgamesh and Enkidu became related to one another. Understandably, Gilgamesh stands as the rather hedonistic character, with his godlike attributes reaping him benefits in the form of praise from his subjects and fulfillments to his promiscuity. The huge appetite of Gilgamesh for sex has led people to call on the gods to grant them the power to contain him. Enkidu served as that very creation, specifically designed to help Gilgamesh calm down and moderate

his powers (Wolff 392-398).

Although Gilgamesh evidently emerged as the most powerful against monsters, Enkidu proved to be an equally formidable force as well. Yet, Enkidu did not start his relationship with Gilgamesh favorable, as he was drawn to anger by a prostitute assigned by the gods, who told him that someone else was stronger than him. Obviously referring to Gilgamesh, Enkidu embarked on looking for him and see if he could size up to his power. Enkidu, apparently, could not accept that Gilgamesh is stronger than him, given the amicable treatment given to him by the animals in the forest where he lives. The journey of Enkidu, thus, proceeded immediately after the prostitute turn him into a civilized being, which made the animals aversive to him and vulnerable once more to hunters (Sasson 259-279).

The desire of Gilgamesh and Enkidu to defeat one another due to bragging rights about their immense strength reached a rather unusual twist as both of them began to fall in love with one another. Vowing never to leave one another, Gilgamesh and Enkidu travelled together in their various exploits, killing various monsters along the way and, in turn, made then stronger. Despite the fact that the people were able to get their wishes with both Gilgamesh and Enkidu having become civilized, the gods were alarmed at the way both of them have garnered their strength. Fears that too much power may overwhelm both Gilgamesh and Enkidu and might thus create more harmful consequences characterized the thinking of the gods that sought to contain both of them. Moreover, the goddess Ishtar was scorned by the fact that Gilgamesh rejected her sexual advances. As a result, the gods gave a debilitating illness to Enkidu, which caused Gilgamesh with

great concern. Enkidu, despite the efforts of Gilgamesh that went in vain, died (Abusch 143-187).

The devastation brought by the death of Enkidu left Gilgamesh extremely lonely and aimless throughout the rest of his life. Gilgamesh slowly ran out of interest in ruling his people and he became increasingly withdrawn. Yet, not too long after Enkidu passed away, Gilgamesh sought to find ways on becoming immortal, given that he does not want to experience what Enkidu have felt when he perished. However, Enkidu did not know that becoming immortal is next to impossible, as he eventually died realizing that everything he has experienced in the past did not really make sense to him. Nevertheless, the legacy of Gilgamesh became notorious for the way he was irresistible and popular among his subjects, with his most important contribution being the infrastructural projects he has commission as well as his move of saving his subjects from the Great Flood (Ruggero 40-47)

One may view Gilgamesh and Enkidu not only as lovers but also as brave men that feared no monster of any sort. The reason why both Gilgamesh and Enkidu were initially clashing with one another is the fact that both believed with great pride that they are the strongest men on earth. The romance between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is unforeseeable to the uninitiated, given that both of them are men and started their encounter with one another as enemies. Such, perhaps, gives meaning to the term " fighting for love," given that Gilgamesh and Enkidu were mad at each other at first. At the same time, the friendship shared by Gilgamesh and Enkidu provides a strong sense of brotherhood, as both of them killed monsters and grew stronger together in their various exploits (Wolff 392-398).

It is noticeable, however, that the gods almost always seemed to interfere into the lives of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Both Gilgamesh and Enkidu were the creations of gods that are equally powerful yet differently situated. Born with a silver spoon, Gilgamesh grew to become highly conceited and promiscuous before his subjects. On the other hand, Enkidu flourished in the forests and took solace in taking care of the animals there. Yet, the fates of Gilgamesh and Enkidu took a rather radical turn due to the manipulation of the gods. The subjects of Gilgamesh pleaded to the gods that he may be contained, whereas the savagery of Enkidu in the forest that led to the eradication of hunting through his special relationship with animals have also been the subject of godly pleas. Such resulted to the meeting of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, their special relationship also formed through godly intervention. The death of Enkidu through illness is also the work of the gods, who sought to curb the growing power of his partnership with Gilgamesh. Overall, the gods did much to shape the characters of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Without the gods, Gilgamesh would not have even met Enkidu (Wolff 392-398).

## **Conclusion**

Gilgamesh undoubtedly found greater strength through his relationship with Enkidu. The romance and friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu did not push through favorably at first, given that both of them were driven by conceit over their power. The eventual partnership Gilgamesh and Enkidu formed with one another made them practically unbeatable in all their monster-killing exploits. Thus, as a show of fear from the gods, they killed Enkidu through an unknown yet powerful illness in order to curb the power of

his partnership with Gilgamesh. Overall, balance in life served as the main theme of the relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. The gods served as the tempering influences that tend to have contained hyperbolic situations and shapers of destiny at the same time - all of which done in the name of fair balance.

## **Works Cited**

Abusch, Tzvi. "Ishtar's Proposal and Gilgamesh's Refusal: An Interpretation of 'The Gilgamesh Epic', Tablet 6, Lines 1-79." *History of Religions* 26. 2 (1986): 143-187. Print.

Sasson, Jack. "Some Literary Motifs in the Composition of the Gilgamesh Epic" *Studies in Philology* 69. 3 (1972): 259-279. Print.

Stefanini, Ruggero. "Enkidu's Dream in the Hittite 'Gilgamesh.'" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28. 1 (1969): 40-47. Print.

Wolff, Hope Nash. "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Heroic Life." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89. 2 (1969): 392-398. Print.