

Over coming
oppression through
any mean essay



**ASSIGN
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Throughout history, people have been oppressed for various reasons.

Likewise in The Epic of Gilgamesh, Mwindo Epic, and The Four Plays, the characters went through oppression and fortunately overcame them in their own ways. The central characters went through oppression and overcame them in their own individual way. Some characters sacrificed their lives, some used force, and others got aid from the gods. However they all overcame oppression. In The Epic of Gilgamesh, the epic begins with the men of Uruk describing Gilgamesh as an overly aggressive ruler, "No son is left with his father for Gilgamesh takes them all, even the children" (62).

Gilgamesh being a man of great power feels that he is superior to others, due to the fact that he is two-thirds god, and one-third man. His arrogance was accompanied with a vast abuse of power. This arrogance leads to him being very cruel to his people. He tormented his people, oppressed them, exhausted them in daily life and in combat, and he gave himself the right to sleep with any unmarried woman. He "demands to be first with the bride, the king to be first and the husband to follow." (68).

Pushed to a state of rage and tired of being oppressed, the people of Uruk cried to Anu to create an equal for Gilgamesh, one that has virtue and innocence (Enkidu). Enkidu, being created to relieve the people of Uruk of their oppressor, started to fulfill his duty upon meeting Gilgamesh. Enkidu the first time Gilgamesh on his way to sleep with a bride. Fortunately for the poor woman, Enkidu arrives just in time to save her from being raped by Gilgamesh. Enkidu distracted Gilgamesh from oppressing his people by taking him on different adventures that help relieve him of his aggressive ways.

Enkidu forms a powerful bond with Gilgamesh, a friend that will serve as his life long companion. Upon the seal of their great friendship, Gilgamesh begins to change his selfish ways, and becomes less of an oppressor. Enkidu finally freed the people of Uruk from their oppressor when he dies.

Gilgamesh couldn't bear the lost of love and friendship so powerful. The grief in his heart has far surpasses the pride that he previously displays so boldly. Gilgamesh becomes frighten and confuse, thus leading to his fear of death.

This leads him to on a journey to find everlasting life. However upon finding the plant, Gilgamesh forgets about gaining internal life for himself and offers to give the plant to the elders of his kingdom. Through Enkidu, the kingdom of Uruk was freed from their oppressor, and in turn gains a compassionate and great leader. A better example of oppression is in the Mwindo Epic. In this book, Mwindo's life is in danger, his power hungry father made many attempts to kill Mwindo. Shemwindo did not want a male child because he was too selfish to share his kingdom with his son.

Mwindo is chased from his home, however while away, Mwindo releases his oppression by fighting back against Shemwindo his oppressor. Mwindo feels as though that the only way he can be free of his oppressor is by killing him. Mwindo goes on a quest in trying to kill his father. However Shemwindo escapes, and is even pursued into the underworld to continue their fight. Fortunately, towards the end, Shemwindo was willing to sacrifice his power by giving it to Mwindo. Although Mwindo's oppressor doesn't die, the oppression however ends.

The relationship between father and son was fixed and Mwindo also overcomes his oppression. In the Blood Wedding, the main characters were also oppressed. The bridegroom was oppressed emotionally by his mother. After losing her husband and son violently, the mother became scared that he'll lose her only son that's left. She became over protective and wants her son to stay at home like a prisoner. She makes him feel guilty about wanting to live his life and getting married. To free himself from his over protective mother, the Bridegroom decides to get married even though his mother doesn't really approve.

To make matters complicated, it is to a girl that she doesn't like. This brings me to introduce Leonardo and the Bride. These two characters are oppressed because they have to suppress and hide their love for each other. Although Leonardo is married to another woman, he still love the Bride which is clearly displayed by his actions towards his wife. He is cruel to his wife and tries to reignite the romance between himself and the Bride. Fortunately, he is victorious in trying to convince her that they belong together, by them running away together.

However toward the end of the story, Leonard and the Groom are killed, nonetheless he and the Bride were able to express the once oppressed love for each other. The second play, The House of Bernarda Alba, reveals a great deal of oppression. After the death of her second husband, Bernarda Alba, an unpleasant and dominating woman, imposes a period of mourning on her household that is to last eight years, as has been traditional in her family. Bernarda has five daughters, aged between 20 and 39, who are all in the

prime of their years, whom she has shielded and controlled to an excessive degree and prohibited from any form of relationship.

The mourning period further isolates the daughters, and tension mounts within the household. Color is very important in *The House of Bernarda Alba*. The walls of the house are all painted white. This is characteristic of homes in Spain, since white reflects the scorching sun. There is, however, a deeper meaning than the simple practicality of white in the play. White is symbolic of purity and cleanliness along with lifelessness, pallor and emptiness. All of these features are descriptive of the life the daughters of Bernarda are forced to lead. In fact, the family name Alba means white.

This color is shown to be in sharp contrast to the black dress of the women in mourning as they enter the stage. The white of the walls serves to exaggerate the black of their dresses. Black is indeed the color of death and may not only indicate the death that has occurred but also allude to the death that is to come as a way of freeing ones self from oppression. By all wearing the same lifeless color the women also lose their individuality. This is very important in this work since Bernarda does not want her girls to be noticed and refuses to let them show their true colors.

They appear as nuns, not as eligible young women. When Adela removes her black clothes of mourning and opts to wear her green birthday dress into the yard to feed the chickens. Green is often regarded as being a symbol of Earth, youth and fertility. The green of the dress really is a symbol for Adela herself. Adela wants nothing more than to be free from her mother's rule and

to live the rest of her young life as she wishes. She is full of the vigor of youth and is of the perfect age to marry and begin her own family.

The vibrant green color is a very sharp contrast to black signifying how she cares not for the restrictions imposed on her by her mother. It transpires that Adela, the youngest daughter, conducts an illicit affair with Pepe el Romano. She becomes increasingly passionate, refusing to submit to her mother's will and arguing with her sisters, particularly Martirio, who is revealed to also be in love with Pepe. The tension in the story comes to a head as the family confronts one another and Bernarda chases Pepe with a gun. A shot is heard and it is implied to Adela that Pepe has been killed.

Adela flees, and we learn that she has committed suicide out of grief. In this case the oppressor forced her daughter to kill herself as her only means of freedom. Adela tries to resist oppression by rebelling and showing her individuality, however it wasn't successful. In these books, the center characters all face oppression and overcome them in their own unique way. Gilgamesh's people found him a great partner that though him compassion, Mwindo, faced his oppressor by using force, and in the end making peace with his father.

In *The Blood Wedding*, a son was an oppressed by her fear of losing him, which was his inevitable faith. Leonardo and the Bride were forced to conceal their love for each other, which caused them to run away as their only means of celebrating their love. In *The House of Bernarda Alba*, the daughters are oppressed by their mother and act out in rebellion. This, leads

to one daughter dieing as a result of this oppression. In all these stories the main characters took drastic steps in overcoming their oppression.