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Contents

Anxiety in Classroom Oral Participation among ESL College Students <i>Bernadette D. Bagalay</i> <i>Roxan T. Bayan</i> <i>Jane C. Caliboso</i> <i>Boyot L. Batang</i>	7
Logic, Reasoning and Language Structures: A Comparative Study of Literature and Linguistics Learners <i>Rasib Mahmood</i> <i>Abduh Almashy</i> <i>Iftikhar Alam</i> <i>Akhter Habib Shah</i>	17
English Speaking Anxiety, Stressors, and Coping Techniques of College Student Researchers <i>Michael E. Santos</i> <i>Wilfredo Q. Cunanan</i> <i>Arnelia B. Mandap</i>	29
Between Perception and Practice: The Emergency of Encouraging EFL Teachers to Implant HOTS in Their Classrooms <i>Dwita Laksmi Rachmawati</i> <i>Oikurema Purwati</i> <i>Syafi'ul Anam</i> <i>Slamet Setiawan</i>	36
Language Proficiency and Plagiarism Practices among Graduate Students <i>Caren Casama Orlanda-Ventayen</i> <i>Randy Joy Magno Ventayen</i>	55
Gender and Interruption in Conversation Made by EFL Students <i>Ariyanti</i> <i>Rinda Fitriana</i> <i>Arbain</i>	67
Contextualization on the Teaching and Learning Approach of Purposive Communication Syllabus for the Bachelor of Physical Education Students <i>Michael E. Santos</i> <i>Jumel C. Miller</i> <i>Jonar T. Martin</i>	78
Metacognition in The Senior High School in one National High School in The Philippines <i>Narciso Ambrocio Martin Jr.</i> <i>Randy Joy Magno Ventayen</i> <i>Ricky Dulay Retuerne</i>	84
Blended Learning in A Research Writing Class: Perceptions and Experiences from ESL Secondary Learners <i>Bonjovi Hassan Hajan</i> <i>Reynold C. Padagas</i>	99

Implementing Eco-translation to Build Translation Competence and Course Design <i>Sugeng Hariyanto</i>	118
Guided Peer Tutorial Fosters Subject Mastery and Builds Essential Soft Skills <i>Margie Ugaddan Alcaide</i>	140
Flipped Learning Approach in Teaching Writing in a University Setting: Students' Experiences, Preferences, and Perspectives <i>Gregorio P. Ebron, Jr.</i> <i>Romualdo A. Mabuan</i>	157
The Use of Blended Learning System in Teaching Language <i>Ma. Claire M. Guevara</i>	180
Social Networking sites and ESL Students Writing Proficiency in English <i>Jane C. Caliboso</i>	220
Impact of Covid-19 on English Language Teaching in Yemen: Challenges and Opportunities <i>Farooq A. ALTameemy</i> <i>Yasser Alrefaee</i>	234
Prospective Reading Teachers' Digital Reading Habit: A Cross-sectional Design <i>Bernadeth T. Abequibel</i> <i>Criselda D.R. Ricohermosa</i> <i>Ericson O. Alieto</i> <i>Cheryl P. Barredo</i> <i>Rochelle Irene G. Lucas</i>	249
Qatari Public Schools' EFL Educators' Knowledge About Pa and Phonics <i>Tahani Allouh</i> <i>Saba Al Qadhi</i> <i>Wael Yousef</i>	264
Political Alienation in the Jordanian Short Story: Selected Models <i>Sanaa Kamel Ahmad Shalan</i> <i>Muna Mod Mahmoud Muhilan</i> <i>Moath Haza' Ali AL-Zu'bi</i>	280
Legendizing of The Hero in "The Epic of Gilgamesh" <i>Muna Mod Mahmoud Muhilan</i> <i>Sanaa Kamel Ahmad Shalan</i> <i>Moath Haza' Ali AL-Zu'bi</i>	293

Legendizing of The Hero in “The Epic of Gilgamesh”

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Abstract

This study looks at the hero character in (The Epic of Gilgamesh), which converts this ancient historical epic into a mythological structure that aligns the characters to establish its architecture. The study began with an overview of "The Epic of Gilgamesh," as well as the gap between the history of this hero's character and its mythology, and then moved on to the following topics that formed the legend of the hero in "The Epic of Gilgamesh," which are: the legend of the character (Gilgamesh) in "The Epic of Gilgamesh," and the legend of the characters next to the character (Gilgamesh), the mythical beings in the "Epic of Gilgamesh".

Keywords: myth, hero, epic, Gilgamesh

A Look at the Epic of Gilgamesh

The Epic of Gilgamesh is the longest and most comprehensive epic known to ancient civilizations; it is also the first in time for all of its great epics. It was written about 4,000 years ago. As a result, it has earned the title "The Odyssey of Iraq." It's a legendary epic with a legendary build. Because there is a fundamental distinction between a myth and an epic, the story's characters are generally gods, and the myth's events center largely around creation, the world, the conflict of good and evil forces, and religious beliefs.

"But we must make it obvious that this distinction between myth and epic is a question of form, and that the borders may not be respected in many circumstances, so that the myth becomes the epic and the epic is a myth," argues Fadel Abdel Wahed Ali. This is mostly owing to the fact that many myths contain heroes who, as previously said, are the heroes of the gods, who conduct heroic actions and adventures that lead the researcher to surpass the acceptable bounds, and so such stories are considered epics (Ali, 1999).

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This work is rated as epic based on the above. We receive the idea of human free will, which may determine his destiny and sometimes defy heavenly aspirations, because it displays heroic exploits conducted by a person alongside deities who occasionally intervene in the events of the narrative, frequently directing the affairs of humans. (Ali, 1999)

This great epic was inscribed on twelve tablets, and it was customary for the Babylonians and Akkadians to address it with the first phrase or portion of poetry in it in such literary collections. Something, and this is the opening sentence of the (Epic of Gilgamesh)'s tablet. (Baqir, 1976) Written in Akkadian cuneiform, this long work tells the tale of a heroic quest for fame and immortality. The first publisher of the manuscripts of the epic that were found at the beginning was Paul Haupt, and this was published in the third issue of *The Assyrian Library* magazine in 1884 AD under the title "The Babylonian Epic of Nimrud," and then some other miscellaneous parts were published. Paul Haupt and Alfred Yermis.

After the scattered manuscripts were published and compared to each other, the researcher (B. Yinch) managed to publish the epic in full (Baqir, 1976).

There is additional evidence that the Epic of Gilgamesh was performed on stage or recited as part of a particular celebration or rite. The question of establishing the aim of its organization is a tough one to resolve, but the reason for its existence is the presence of the stories that comprise it in the oral narrative legacy. It may be merely for fun at monarchs' palaces or private dwellings, or around desert caravan campfires, or on lengthy trips amid the Hindus and the heads of the Arabian Gulf. (Ibrahim, 1970)

Mesopotamian sources identify the author of the seventh-century book unearthed in Nineveh as Sin-let-Unini, a famous writer and exorcist monk of the Kassite era" (Daly, 1991), and this conclusion is fair to accept without reservation. Justified, but we'll never know how heavily this author relied on a pre-recorded spoken text.

Nothing is certain whether the epic arrived complete or incomplete, except that in this regard, we refer to the feature of (pre-empting events) or (pre-empting outcomes), as Taha Baqir refers to it, i.e., anticipating what the narration or story will result from and hinting at the solution and the end (Baqir, 1976); The Epic of Gilgamesh opens with a prelude that introduces the novel's hero and praises his achievements, as well as hints to the novel's end. The explanation for this is most likely to move the listener and excite his interest in the novel's events.

This type of ancient literature or poetry can be comparable to current cinematic presentation methods; for example, some films begin with a snapshot of the novel's finale or one of its most important moments, then the novel's episodes begin in order, and conclude with the scene from which they began.

Based on this phenomena, the fact that the Epic of Gilgamesh's opening or prologue is equivalent to its finish indicates that the writings that have reached us from it almost entirely depict the epic.

However, it is unknown how much this writer relied on a pre-written oral narrative text that he split into eleven panels. After the introduction, an addendum recounting Enkidu's voyage to the underworld was appended to the Twelfth Tablet.

It is a poetic epic written in Babylonian Akkadian that tells the narrative of King Gilgamesh of Uruk's life and works in a way that combines fact and folklore. Because it is the epic's last literary form after over a thousand years of evolution and change.

This primary text differs from the others in that its clay tablets were found quite undamaged and in a condition that allowed for sequential reading, despite fractures in some of them and distortions in many of their lines.

This epic has gotten a lot of attention because of its humanity, and humanity implies that the human person is at the center of everything. We find a complete examination of its fundamental themes, its relationships with gods, creatures, and nature in general, its attitudes toward life and death, good and evil, and its beliefs about its own existence, as well as other topics that may be grouped together as "human philosophy." (Ahmad, 1988)

Perhaps the humanity of this epic is one of the most important reasons for its spread, along with the glorification of this epic for the heroic man rather than the hero, the god or a group of gods, and this epic was uniquely able to formulate the different and even contradictory feelings in a literary, short, and poetic form, which gave it its own attractiveness and strong influence. As a result, some academics regard it as the pinnacle of Mesopotamian literary brilliance.

Legendizing Gilgamesh character in "The Epic of Gilgamesh"

From a historical standpoint, Gilgamesh is a legitimate historical figure; he is one of the rulers of Mesopotamia during the Sumerian era (Ibrahim, 1970) and not a fictional character created by the legendary imagination of the Mesopotamian people. Recent excavations have proven the existence of a king of Uruk named Gilgamesh who lived around the middle of the third millennium BC and occupied this king's place in the King List of Sumer; the list of kings mentions Gilgamesh as one of the prominent kings, and he was preceded in ruling by the kings of Sumer, who are: Miskiyaj Jasher, his son Anmarkar, Dromusi.

Thus, Gilgamesh is the fifth Sumerian monarch on the list, yet he surpassed everyone in terms of reputation and became the undisputed hero of Sumerian legend. Many poetries were collected in it, and epics were composed on him, extolling his valor. Based on this scant knowledge on Gilgamesh, some historians estimate the historical Gilgamesh's existence to about the year 2600 BC AD, and his deification to approximately the year 2500 BC.

Gilgamesh is the first important character in the epic whose name is a realistic figure with a proven historical reality, and he is represented in the epic as follows: "the total lord of the city, commanding its population, his power is unrivaled, descended from a heavenly origin." As a result, Gilgamesh appears to be a mythological figure rather than a genuine person. (Al-Miqdad, 1984) However, this character has been largely written about and carried with many legendary predicates that transferred him from the realm of documented history to the realm of legend and its predicates, and there is no doubt that the epic of Gilgamesh played the largest role in this legend, and made him play the heroic role that usually represents that if there is a glorification of him and his legendary characteristics, it is because the group presented them to him, no matter what. (Khorshid, 1980)

The epic mentions Gilgamesh as a mix of God and Human; two-thirds of him is a god, and only a third is human, and he is the feared son of the cow (Nenson), a representation of the sacred bull in ancient civilizations, and he possesses a giant and strong body befitting his divinity, even if it is imperfect because a third of him is human, and the epic tablets say:

"The son of Uruk, the gored bull

Who goes ahead as befits a leader

Descendant of Lugalpanda, the all-powerful Gilgamesh

The feared son of the cow "Nansun" (Al-Sawah, 1996)

***Two-thirds of him is god, one-third of him is human, his body is made as a model,
Conqueror of the mountain passes,
digging wells in the flanks of the mountains" (Al-Sawah, 1996)***

According to the epic, Gilgamesh is a mix of humans and gods; his father is Logal Panda, the third king of Uruk in the first dynasty of Uruk that ruled after the flood, and his mother is Neenson, a minor goddess in the deity complex. It was given the name "cow," and the title "cow" was one of the highest titles in the ancient East. In those civilizations, the cow represents giving and life.

Gilgamesh's mother, Ninson, is the god's wife (Logalbanda), (Daly, 1991) and he is not Gilgamesh's father, but only his stepfather; as for his father, he is unknown, though the Sumerian King List refers to him as the high priest of Kulab, and Fadel Ali says: "His father was lillu, and the term (lillu) refers to a type of demon or apostate. (Ali, 1999) That is why some academics believe Gilgamesh's father was a jinn and married Ninson, therefore his son (Gilgamesh) inherited two-thirds of his father's supernatural divine traits, and we also use the term (lillu) as an adjective, meaning "mad" or "crazy." "a fool" (Ali, 1999)

The people of Uruk clearly want to elevate their ruler (Gilgamesh) from the rank of human kings to the position of deity, as did many Sumerians, Babylonians, and pagan peoples who elevated their lords and kings to the ranks of gods and demigods.

The exploits of Gilgamesh are evident from the first tablet of the epic, which befits his myth of being two-thirds god; he is the one who saw the world, discovered it, knew the hidden secrets in it, and went on a long journey; he is the one who raised the impenetrable walls of his city (Uruk) that he rules, and of which the epic tablets say:

***"It is he who has seen everything to the edges of the world."
He is the one who knew everything, and mastered everything.
He saw hidden secrets, revealed hidden things.
He went on a long journey, and he was beset by fatigue and exhaustion.
And he engraved on a tablet of clay all his travels
Raise the walls for your impregnable Uruk,
and the sacred temple of Ianna, the blessed camper" (Al-Sawah, 1996)***

This text is the beginning of the epic, and it talks about Gilgamesh, who is described by the text as having complete vision and complete knowledge (Al-Sawah, 1996), and thus he is omniscient, or nearly omniscient, and thus a god in the eyes of those who wrote these tablets, because omniscience is one of the attributes of gods, not humans, who are characterized by the limitations and limitations of knowledge.

Gilgamesh constructed a magnificent temple at Uruk for Aanna, and Uruk is one of the Mesopotamian region's historical and civilizational centers. It is one of the region's early civilization cities, and the city still remains today, bearing the name (Dassam Al-Warka), and its remnants are presently situated near (Khader Al-Daraji) in the Governorate of Al-Muthanna, represented by its ruins in the hills of Waror, Al-Waswas, and Hamad Al-Warki.

The city of Uruk is now Warqa, which is on the lower course of the Euphrates, distant from its shore, to the west, leaving the town a paper away from him. (Al-Sawah, 1996) (Ali, 1999) According to Firas al-Sawah, "current archaeological evidence suggests that Uruk was the greatest Sumerian city at the start of the dynasty era, and that it had attained the status of a genuine metropolis before other urban centers in southern Mesopotamia." (Al-Sawah, 1996) This city has undergone a lot of growth and urban civilisation; in 2600 BC, Gilgamesh erected the Great Wall.

Uruk (or Erk) is the same as Warka, and it is located 220 kilometers south of Baghdad. Its Sumerian name is Unng, which means "settler."

The Babylonians named it Uruk, and Warka was made up of two major bodies: the first was called "Eanna," and it encompassed the region (the ziggurat) and the goddess's temple (Anana), i.e., Ishtar, whose principal focus of devotion was the ziggurat (Warka), (Kramer, 1971)

The second portion is known as "Kullab," and Gilgamesh is sometimes referred to as the master (Kullab), and in this section is the temple devoted to the deity Anu, known as "Anu-Antu." (Daly, 1991)

Anana, for whom Gilgamesh erected a temple in Uruk, is the same famous goddess (Ishtar), who is in Sumerian Enin, Enina, and Anana, the goddess of love and war, and the lady of Uruk and Arbel, and her father is the god Anu in Uruk traditions, and in others it is the god Sin, the god of the moon, and she is his brother (Arishkekal), and one of her derivatives is Its emblems include the morning and evening stars, as well as the form of a rose. (Daly, 1991) Ishtar was considered a goddess of Uruk in ancient Babylonian mythology. Because it was she who brought the skills of civilization from (Eridu) to (Uruk), making the latter a hub of Sumerian civilization, and so bearing the name (Anana). (Kramer, 1971)

As the giver of science and culture to Uruk, as well as the giver of protection to this city, she has the right to be called by her name, except that she - despite being her protector and the transmitter of knowledge to her - does not hesitate to get angry at her with great rage and cunning when she is angry with her king (Gilgamesh), who refuses her request to marry him, and she sends on (Uruk) a bull that exhausts them with death and In a land of corruption, ruin, and intimidation of the people.

The Bull of the heaven has descended

***In his first bellow, he killed a hundred men
two hundred too***

In his second bellow, he killed a hundred men

Moreover...

In his third bellow....he pounced on Enkidu." (Al-Sawah, 1996)

We recollect a fascinating exchange between the deity (Anu), the father of Ishtar, the god of the sky, and his outraged daughter (Ishtar), who demands that her father procure a bull in order to inflict revenge on Gilgamesh, who broke her pride by refusing to marry her. The same rejected father threatens him with releasing the dead of the earth, destroying havoc, and causing global famine, so her father complies to her request and presents her with the mythical bull she seeks to fulfill her dream. It is the destruction of Gilgamesh's ruled city (Uruk) in retaliation for him, and the tablets specifically mention this threat from (Ishtar) to her father (Anu):

"If you do not make me the bull of heaven,

I smash the gates of the underworld; I take out its huge gates

Leave the doors wide open

And I will make the dead rise and eat like the living..." (Al-Sawah, 1996)

Ishtar, the goddess of love, had a relationship with the realm of death and the dead through her sister Arishkigal, also pronounced Arishingal, who is the great queen of the lands, the lady of the earth, and the wife of (Nergal), the mother of (Ninazu), the goddess of death. (Daly, 1991) Many myth and legend specialists believe she is the sole powerful figure in the realm of the dead, although it is apparent that Ishtar had jurisdiction over that world as well, else she would not have threatened to unleash the dead.

However, her authority has waned in the higher world, that is, in the world of the living, but the effect of that first power lives on in (the Uruki's) imagination and memory, and in what Firas al-Sawah says about (Ishtar) in his speech: "She was helping her sister Arishkegal to fill Hell with people" (Al-Sawah, 1996) In other passages, she appears to have the same jurisdiction over the underworld as her sister (Arishkegal), which validates our prior views regarding the two goddesses' oneness and their ancestry from a single beginning that the legend had not forgotten in those days." (Al-Sawah, 1996)

According to the myth of the bull in ancient East thought, Ishtar chose the bull to carry out her vengeance mission against the city of Uruk and its king (Gilgamesh). For the ancient Egyptians, it was associated with the sky, as the four-horned bull of the god Ra guarded the roads of the sky, and both the sun and the moon bore the title (the bull of the sky), and the provinces of Lower Egypt adopted the concept of the holy bull. Thus, kings of the modern state descended from ancient Egyptian families bore the title (the great bull), or the title of the strong (Horus the bull), and the ruler was depicted in the image of a bull throwing his enemies to the ground with his horns. (Luker, 2000)

The Sumerians believed the bull of the sky to be the one which burns with his breath in battle. (Lloyd, 1988) And (El) was the main god of the Phoenicians, ruling over all of Canaan and known as the bull. The bull was a symbol of strength and power for the Canaanites. (Khoury, 1990) It is in charge of the fertility of the land and agricultural growth, just as it is in charge of the fertility of women. In light of this, the first person's optimism about the moon after he worshiped him, and the bull was a symbol of the moon revered by the ancient Egyptians (Khoury, 1990), and the Arabs worshiped the moon in the pre-Islamic age, and he was the deity of the Arabs of the south, and they worshiped him as well. Donkeys and a dog were symbols of the moon in Dumat al-Jandal, Banu Abd, and Du Banu Amer, while the bull and snake were also symbols of the moon. Both have the connotation of regeneration and fecundity. "

However, the worship of the sun soon surpassed the worship of the moon and all other planets, and the cycle of the sun became the sacred cycle, a symbol of life (Luker, 2000), and Ra (for the ancient Egyptians) became a deity of the sun, and the sacred bull became a symbol of the sun, in addition to being a symbol of the moon (Luker, 2000), as the sun took a special shape for each hour of its daily journey. It was a youngster in the first and second hours, a monkey shooting an arrow, that is, emitting a beam of light in the seventh and twelfth hours, and an old man's head in the eleventh and twelfth hours. A ram is using a crutch. (Luker, 2000)

Returning to Gilgamesh, his mythology was also portrayed by the fact that he played the roles of rescuer and rebel, with these two roles being mythological emblems; On the one hand, the Savior desired to free himself and mankind from the ravages of death, which he observed afflicting people around him, beginning with his buddy (Enkidu), who was plagued by his death, and from the side of the rebel. He is the one who rebelled against death and sought to destroy it, just as he had rebelled against the goddess (Ishtar), who refused to marry him and fell victim to her wrath and horrible vengeance against him and everyone (Uruk).

The Savior is often a symbol that insists on the imagination of ancient tales, as well as on various heavenly and non-heavenly faiths, as well as on certain cults. (Bseisu, 1983) Despite the diversity and variance of the Savior's image in all of the narratives, it performs one fundamental task: to fill the planet with justice after it has been filled with oppression, to establish God's rule and state on the earth, and to abolish injustice, exploitation, and tyranny (tyranny of the body). (Bseisu, 1983) With eventual redemption, (Encyclopedia, 2000) this image arises frequently

among those who are oppressed and under the yoke of tyranny, whether from their rulers or foreign invaders. (Bseisu, 1983)

The rebellious symbol, which gives Gilgamesh other mythological shades, emerges primarily from the idea of the rebellion of the conscious and educated human will, the product of insightful thought, which makes him intellectually inherited by humanity as an expression of its rejection of tyranny and alienation.

The ancient mythologies were rife with revolt, particularly against the gods. (Bazanlaki, 1996) Perhaps the most famous example is (Prometheus') revolt against the leader of the Greek gods (Zeus). According to Greek myth, he created man from dirt and water, then took up men's cause against the gods, stealing fire from the sky with a reed and returning it to the people on Earth. To be able to face the hazards of nature, Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, grew enraged and instructed Hephaestus to create (Pandora) a punishment for man; he (Zeus) (Prometheus) was bound to a rock at the summit of a mountain peak in the Caucasus, and an eagle devoured his liver till death. If it came to an end, it was renewed, and the eagle went back to its prey. (Shapiro, 1999) If (Prometheus) had rebelled against Zeus, the chief of the gods, Gilgamesh would have turned down her marriage proposal, because he sought with all his might to rebel against death and obtain the herb of life and immortality, and he actually obtained it, almost ate it, and obtained immortality after he gave him to him (Utanpishitim). The flood survivor is the herb of immortality after a lengthy voyage through mythical areas and surviving impossible tests and lethal obstacles, but a wicked snake took it and obtained immortality for itself when it ate it, therefore it became a symbol of immortality and life that never ends. The moon was then identified with it since they are both partners in the cycle of continuity and survival through transition and survival through another. (Alzebaree & Yavuz, 2016; Luker, 2000)

When Gilgamesh returned to his country, he learned that immortality might be found not only in perpetual life, but also in rebuilding, creativity, and achievement. As a result, he was able to resolve the conundrum of immortality and man. Although the epic concluded with a sad and disappointing ending for Gilgamesh and all humanity, it did present an alternative to this sadness, albeit without the alternative (Gilgamesh's objectives), but it is an alternative that appears rational nonetheless. If immortality is impossible for a human person, it is because the gods have kept him from the beginning of time, so Gilgamesh and any other human being might immortalize their acts and achievements, so their memory lasts forever.

Gilgamesh is depicted in myth as the deity of the underworld who justly governs over it, and he was also known as the judge of death. The epic also witnessed four stages that it went through, which Firas al-Sawwah characterized as follows: (Al-Sawah, 1996)

1. The first phase: (individuality and absolute freedom): (Gilgamesh) was the only free individual in his society. He was a king with absolute power, the strongest of men in body and mind, the most navigable and intelligent, full of vitality and perpetual activity. His movements did not calm day and night.
2. The second phase (Commitment): That is when the friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu deepened, and a deep love developed between the two parties that changed the course of their lives.

3. The third phase: (the disintegration of reality and the search for the impossible): When Gilgamesh leaves the city of Uruk alone and sad, in search of the wise (Utnapishtim) in his search for life and death.
4. Fourth Phase: (Reconstructing Reality): In this phase Gilgamesh's search for immortality ends, only to return disappointed after the plant of immortality was stolen from him, and he began directing every effort to serve his people and develop their conditions.

Legendizing characters next to the character of Gilgamesh

The myth of Gilgamesh's personality is evident in its proximity to other mythical characters, and the irony is that all of these legendary characters mentioned in the epic are all illusory and imaginary characters with no historical basis, with the exception of the character Gilgamesh, who was mentioned above when discussing this delusion. The inclusion of these legendary figures in the epic, on the other hand, supports a mythical entity (Gilgamesh), and the most notable of these legendary characters present in this epic are:

A-The legendary figure of the sages of Uruk:

The epic says in some of its talk about the impregnable walls of Uruk, which Gilgamesh is credited with building:

Raise the wall of Urk, walk on it,

Touch what is his tool, examine the workmanship of his bricks

Are not its stones of roasted wages?

And the Seven Sages who laid the foundation for him?

One buyer for the city, one for the orchards, and another

For the meadows, and the rest is land without planting or building for the temple of Ishtar

Three badges and uncultivated land, is the city of Uruk.

Tell the graves, the copper

Broke its bronze gate,

Take the graves lazuli and kill him.

Aloud...

About Gilgamesh who went through all odds.” (Al-Sawah, 1996)

This text refers to the great walls that surround Uruk and indicates that the Seven Sages of this city were the ones who laid the foundations of the walls, and they are not real personalities at all, as they do not exist in the city's real history, but the cuneiform tradition states that "seven holy divine sages, sent by God Aya, to teach mankind the arts of civilization." Adapa, Oandoka, Enmedoka, Enmikalma, Enmipka, An, Enlilda, and Otoapsu are among these sages. Likewise, each of them is recognized by several additional names and titles.” (Daly, 1991)

This sage is known as "Montalco," which means "adviser," and is attributed with the construction of walled towns. Perhaps the mythology implies that they are the ones who taught humanity how to erect walls around cities. It is appropriate, then, that the tale credits them with laying the foundations of the city's walls (Uruk), understanding that this building involves the connotation of exalting the walls' buildings and praising their craftsmanship and the height of their nurseries. The sages are not engineers, architects, or even artisans, as some accounts claim, but rather legendary beings who bear the task of teaching mankind how to build city walls, and the

gods are the ones who erected this city and its temple, where the gods descend. And, if the sages are fictional and do not exist, a questioner may inquire, "What is the story of the copper chest?" What is his connection to Gilgamesh? What does it have to do with the Gilgamesh Epic?

To address this question, we must look to the ancient Sumerians and Babylonians, who used to bury their records and texts inscribed on tablets in boxes in the foundations of massive structures, for reasons unknown. Perhaps they chose it since it is the most distant and inaccessible location. Perhaps they trusted in the mystical capacity of these locations to keep their documents safe. Whatever the motive for this conduct, we may deduce that they recorded this epic on tablets and buried it with its chests within the walls of Uruk and other Sumerian cities. (Al-Sawah, 1996)

B-The legendary figure of the sacred prostitute:

The sacred prostitute appears multiple times in the (Epic of Gilgamesh), assuming its legendary and ancient role in the ancient myths that looked upon the sacred prostitute with reverence and reverence, and assigned them the most important and dangerous roles in maintaining and completing the life cycle.

The sacred prostitute is understood according to the myth's view of sex, seeing it as one of the cycles of existence and life, and without it, there would be no life. He saw it as a divine receptacle that connects it to the supreme luminous level", (Al-Sawah, 1996) and saw the sexual act as a transgression of temporal and spatial conditions, as well as a fusion of the life cycle and its cosmic powers that pervade living existence. (Al-Sawah, 1996)

In the beginning, the negative and the positive moved in the womb of the Great (Euroborus), and they married, and they had children, and in the beginning, the mountain of heaven and earth was also born from the womb of the first waters, and desire traveled between their poles, so they united, separated, and the universe arose from them, and in the beginning, the wind fell in love with her, and she was the beginning of the end of the mass of the first substance, and in the beginning, the spirit of the masculine deity hovered over the feminine waters, and in the early times she created (Ishtar) from herself a husband, and united with him.

In light of the belief that sex is an activity emanating from a universal force that organizes the entire universe, the sacred prostitution that was common in the civilizations of the ancient East appeared. Dedicated to the source of cosmic energy, yielding to it, energized by it;

Therefore, sacred prostitution on the level of myth was an expression of a cosmic activity that does not calm down, but in its stillness is the stagnation of the world of life. That is why Ishtar was called the holy prostitute, (Al-Sawah, 1996) "and her preoccupation with the sex that the male legend takes on her was the eye of her virtue", (Al-Sawah, 1996, p. 183) and women often practiced sacred prostitution in the great mother's temples, and allocated its proceeds to the temple and to God. (Al-Sawah, 1996)

The prostitute appeared in several roles in (The Epic of Gilgamesh); at the beginning of the epic, the prostitute appeared who tempted Enkidu, then pushed him on Gilgamesh's path to become his friend after that, after a fisherman used her to trap Enkidu, who was spoiling his nets and smashing his traps that he monitored for prey, as mentioned in Epic tablet:

"Go, turn your face toward Uruk."

Report to Gilgamesh the news of this mighty man

And to give you a priestess of love, to take her with you

Let her break his punch, with more strength than his

When the water is returned, the animal is watered.

*Let her dry her clothes and reveal her charms,
He is close to her if he sees her.*

Disguised as being close to her when he sees her" (Daly, 1991)

The dialogue between the prostitute and Enkidu is mentioned on another site with the following text:

"Man of the Beginning from the depths of the prairie"

Glamor girl frees her breasts, bares her breasts

Just pick it up

She was not ashamed, I took her warmth

She put down her dress, fell on her,

And now he is in love with her" (Al-Sawah, 1996)

The holy temple prostitutes emerge elsewhere in the epic, serving the temple and sharing their grief with everybody. When (Gilgamesh) and (Enkidu) slaughtered the legendary and sacred bull of Heaven sent by (Ishtar) to (Uruk) to exact vengeance on its people and king; And, in order to wreak devastation on it, (Ishtar) met with the temple prostitutes, with whom they shared sorrow over the dead bull:

So Ishtar gathered the vowed daughters

The women of the temple and its purposes

On the thigh of the celestial bull she mourned." (Al-Sawah, 1996)

We are then faced with another interaction with sex that we hardly know in our current societies, not by its behavior, but by its purpose, meaning and philosophy; The sacred sex was associated with the woman (the female) when her worship was superior to the worship of the man; Because it is she who gives birth and maintains the continuity of the human race; And because her role in the economic process was not inferior to the man's, but rather exceeded him most of the time.

Since the beginning of civilizations, the ancient man saw in the sexual impulse an activator of the movement of life, and pushing it forward, and he saw that it is part of a sexual power represented in the gods (Ishtar) who deposit this energy and strength in the bodies and then stimulate it and release it, and he did not see in the sexual act as a response to a worldly purpose. In order to achieve individual pleasure, it is a response to a universal call; Therefore, sex was associated with ritual and worship, and religious celebration in some of its sexual manifestations was a ritual and worship. (Al-Sawah, 1996)

In the light of this, we can understand the meaning of the sacred prostitution that was common in the ancient East; "Sacred prostitution is sexual intercourse between parties who do not have a personal bond, nor are they motivated by specific motives related to individual longing for a particular person, or related to procreation and family formation. "the ocean, and to the ocean you shall return." (Al-Sawah, 1996, p. 177)

"Ishtar was the sacred prostitute, because it is the center of the comprehensive sexual energy that is not linked to a specific subject, and its immersion in the permanent sexual act is only an expression, on the level of legend, of the activity of that energy that does not calm down, because in its stillness the world of life is stagnant." (Al-Sawah, 1996, pp. 177-181)

According to Dr. Ali Al Shawk, "The name Ishtar is derived from the Sumerian word *tarrush*, which indicates the meaning of (womb), because the Sumerian *tur-shay* means (womb, caterpillar), with the same meaning as the Akkadian word *shatru*, also: Ashtartu (Akkadian), which means a holy prostitute". (Al-Shawk, 1994, p. 12)

Sex, then, is part of the perpetual cosmic movement, and it is the core of what you praise (Ishtar), and sexual behavior is an area for pride, and there is no room for shame or regression. Many depict the feminine and masculine parts of the body, which gives the impression that sex was an object of sanctification and worship, not from the concept of eroticism, but from the fact that it is a symbol of fertility and reproduction. (Al-Shawk, 1994)

In this regard, we must clarify something that may be ambiguous, which is the mechanism of regulating sexual relations in the past in the ancient East. The gender patterns were:

A- Single sexual practice: It is what falls within the institution of marriage, or within individual behaviors.

B- B-Group sex rituals: These are rituals that are based on collective sex on holidays.

C- Sacred prostitution: It is the form that we referred to above, and this sacred prostitution takes place in two forms, namely:

The first form: Holy temporary prostitution: It is the prostitution that all women engage in for one time, or for a period that may be long or short, and after that the woman marries. and redeemed her husband, after she had committed adultery with the first stranger who asked her for it, and took what she had taken from him as a gift to the temple (Ishtar); A woman undertakes this prostitution in return for giving all her beauty and charm to one man afterwards, who is the future husband. As for the second form: it is the eternal sacred prostitution (the holy priestess): "In the temples of Ishtar there were permanent priestesses who were dedicated to keeping the flame of sex blazing, just like the flame of fire that was always burning in their temples, and they were respected and appreciated by society." (Al-Sawah, 1996, p. 19)

From here, we can understand the meaning of the sacred prostitute in (the Epic of Gilgamesh), and we can realize the meaning of the link, which may be a link between two contradictory ones between prostitution and sanctity, to be saved to another equation that says: Prostitution + religious desire = sanctity. Sex in the Far East is a force in the body of the continuous universe, and doing it is a link in the body of this force. Sex in those peoples is a bodily religious behavior that is not different from any other religious behavior; It is a behavior that elevates the body and soul to the refinements of the gods sometimes. The priestess of love in the (Epic of Gilgamesh), believes that Enkidu's practice of sex has made him like a god, according to what is mentioned in one of the epic tablets:

And she said to Enkidu:

"Look at you, Enkidu. I see you are like a god."

So why with the animal,

Wanking your face in the prairie?

Come on, I'll take your hand.

to the markets of Uruk." (Al-Sawah, 1996, p. 163)

This belief is not a special creation of that priestess, but rather a creation of the group and a representation of its spirit and belief that raises the value of sex and elevates it above many forms of sacred worship.

C-The legendary character of Enkidu, a friend of Gilgamesh):

The legendary structure of the character (Enkidu) in the Epic of Gilgamesh is a complex, complex structure, and is the most legendary of the characters in the epic. If Gilgamesh had combined

human and divine qualities in his personality, then (Enkidu) a third characteristic was added to his personality, which is the animalistic characteristic, so he became in his person combining animalistic and humanity, in addition to the epic describing him in some places as a god. Thus, his character becomes more connected to the legendary models than others in the saga.

Among the most important features of the legend in his personality are:

1. The gods created him in response to humans, and they created him from the essence of the god (Anu), and the god of war granted him the attributes of nobility, virtue, and war.
2. 2-The process of humanization (Enkidu): The epic gives us an accurate description of the animal (Enkidu), who eats grass and scrambles with wild beasts for water resources, and how Enkidu was transformed into a social being through women, or sex.
3. 3-The divine (Enkidu) relationships: Although (Enkidu) was created to triumph good over evil, not all of the gods had a good relationship with him; She (Ishtar) took a position hostile to him, which later resulted in his death sentence.

In his book (*The Geometry of Meaning in the Legendary Narration*), Qasim Al-Miqdad has a funny opinion on this matter. He sees an analogy between the process of (Enkidu's) birth and the birth of a human being, saying: "Blowing in a handful of clay by the gods, Tenorta, is an act similar to a sexual act, or the entry of a man's sperm into a woman's egg, and the placement of (Enkidu) in nature." The easy one) corresponds to the position of the child before entering into social life. (Al-Miqdad, 1984)

D-The legendary character of (Utunpishtim):

He is the only human who obtained immortality after the flood, as the epic claims, and the conditions that enabled him to obtain immortality are also mythical, and the path that Gilgamesh intended for him is a legendary path filled with mythical worlds; Utunpishtim, or Shuruppak, as it is sometimes called, was commanded by God to build a ship in which he would take from each pair. That is when the gods became angry with men because of their tumult and decided to destroy them. Therefore, Gilgamesh came to him to guide him to the herb of immortality that he wanted, and he helped him in that after an impossible legendary journey. It is easy to realize how close this character is to the character of the Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, and this confirms that this part of the epic was influenced by this story.

Mythical beings in the Epic of Gilgamesh

Mythical beings are not represented in those drawn by the human imagination or in those in conflict with supernatural worlds outside of nature, but may be represented in beings from our real world that have been given supernatural, exceptional, or sacred qualities, justified or unexplained, and these qualities may bounce to mythical concepts or to what represents a manifestation of the completion of the mythical world's tools, vocabulary, and creatures.

The (Epic of Gilgamesh) included various mythical creatures, beings from the animal world or the jinn, with whom Gilgamesh and Enkidu entered into a bitter fight. The epic has given these creatures mythical descriptions, whether in describing their savage form or in discussing their immense strength and the horror they inspire in the soul.

Among these mythical creatures mentioned in the saga are:

- 1- Humbaba the Genie: Humbaba is the genie or goblin appointed by the gods (Enlil) to guard the Cedar Forest, and is described in the epic as a belligerent warrior. He even hears the animal if it moves in the forest, even if it is sixty leagues away from him.
- 2- The Heavenly Bull: This bull was created by the god (Anu), and sent down to heaven in response to the request of the gods (Ishtar) to take revenge on Gilgamesh, who refused her affection and refused her offer to marry him. This large, huge bull raises terror in the souls of everyone who sees it.
- 3- Scorpion men: Scorpion men are mythical creatures composed of humans and scorpions, or they combine the human form with a scorpion, and their job is to guard the legendary Mount (Macho) with what they send out in terror and panic.

Legendary places in the Epic of Gilgamesh

The legendary place plays an important role in embracing the event and the characters, and in it, time is represented by its dimensions, and it runs according to its timing. "The original place, in the mythical view of the divine formation, is a sacred place, but it loses its original sanctity to the extent of its temporality through long paths of desecration and lawlessness. (Khalil, 1973)

The mythical place differs from the sensual place by the intervention of the individual's or group's perception and emotions in the drawing of the place; the collective experience of the peoples endows the place with special meanings that refer to the place's heterogeneity, even though each place has a value in itself that derives from its connection with the sacred or the unholy, and even has a special significance and a legendary life. (Ajina, 1994)

Therefore, the place is "divided into areas of symbolic value, such as holiness, happiness, misery, bliss, and other connotations related to a network of relationships and symbolic associations between different beings." Similarly, the sacred place is nothing more than having a sacred name, and its sanctity does not enter into the realm of the sensible or the realm of the historically connected reality and with clear features, (Alkhalidi, 2021; Khalil, 1973) even though the myth frequently ignores the place and transcends it through a hero who is able to transcend time and place with his abilities., he subordinates them to his desire, although he was initially confined to them according to the special logic of the myth. It seems that some legends have been associated with the place, and their narrative fabric has depended on the place itself, on its sanctification, and then on its legend. (Khorshid, 1980)

Epic of Gilgamesh began in the city of Uruk, as it ended there, but it passed through many mythical places that have no place except in the imagination of the epic author. Among these places:

- 1- **Cedar Forest:** It is sometimes called the land of the living, and perhaps this is a sign that it is the land in which the immortals live, and the place where a mortal man can attain immortality. This forest is a land without clear geographical borders and without real features that indicate it, and it is not attributed to a specific time or era, and it is the place where no human foot has set foot, and no one left a trace in it until the time of Gilgamesh's visit to it. As it is a land that is the forest of the god (Enlil), the mythical beast (Humbaba)

was appointed as its guardian to create terror among the people so that no one would think of hacking it.

- 2- **Mount Mashu:** One of the legendary places in the epic, that mountain is called (Mashu), or the mountain of the sun, and this mountain is the wall of heaven and the gateway to hell. Gilgamesh has reached this mountain after deciding to search for Utnapishtim, the only person who has attained immortality. This mountain was one of the obstacles that Gilgamesh had to overcome in order to realize Utunpishtim, and there were a set of elements that made Mount Mashu a legendary mountain in its specifications; it is a mountain fraught with dangers, and no human has been able to reach it, and the guardians of this mountain are scorpion-men of terrifying forms.
- 3- **God's Garden:** Gilgamesh's arduous effort to cross the mountain of darkness results in the appearance of the so-called "garden of the goddess." In fact, this garden, with its various names, is like a new mythical image, and one of the epic's legendary images. atmosphere of radiance and joy.
- 4- **The Sea of Death:** Gilgamesh moves from the garden of the gods to another mythical location, and this is the surrounding sea, on whose shore the garden of the gods is located. In the epic, he gives a mythical name that provokes fear and terror, as it is sometimes called the sea of death, and sometimes the waters of death. The Sumerians believed that this ocean was located somewhere beyond the Arabian Gulf, and Gilgamesh reached this sea after he succeeded in crossing Mount Mashu.) where it reaches the garden of the gods, and this sea is located at the end of the garden. This sea was called the sea of death because whoever touches its water dies, hence the other name, the water of death. In this legendary place, Gilgamesh met the legendary innkeeper and Urshanabi, the navigator.
- 5- **Estuary of rivers:** This place did not appear with a special name, but it is the place that lies at the mouth of rivers, and it is an unknown place, so it does not have a specific geographical significance.
- 6- **The lake:** It is the lake in which Gilgamesh dived for the plant of immortality.
- 7- **The Land of Dilmun:** It is located near the location of the ocean, that is, from a place beyond the Arabian Gulf, and it was mentioned in other sources from the country of the two rivers, especially in a tablet that was found in Nippur, as a land where no crowing is heard, and animals live in it safely, and there is no widow. No disease spreads there, aging is unknown, and no crying or wailing occurs.
- 8- **The Realm of the Gods:** The epic gives a deep perception of the world of the gods that were known in the Mesopotamia region. The overlap of these functions of conflict between the gods, conflict and tension, also appears in the relationships of the gods on many occasions. The truth is that the world of the gods is linked in reality to the religious life in Mesopotamia and to the rituals and rituals that developed there.

- 9- The World of the Dead:** This world is mentioned a lot in ancient myths, and it is a world ruled by the gods. This world was mentioned in the twelfth tablet of the epic, which is concerned with the descent of Enkidu to the lower world, and this world is a terrible and frightening world, in which man lives a difficult life. The underworld is described as the world of darkness, the house of dust, the house that does not return from its entrance, the path that does not return to the one who travels, and the house whose inhabitants are deprived of light.

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