Week V

"The Deluge", frontispiece to Gustave Doré's illustrated edition of the Bible. Based on the story of Noah's Ark, this shows humans and a tiger doomed by the flood futilely attempting to save their children and cubs.

A **flood myth** or **deluge myth** is a mythical or religious story of a great flood sent by a deity or deities to destroy civilization as an act of divine retribution. It is a theme widespread among many cultures, though it is perhaps best known in modern times through the biblical and Quranic account of Noah's Ark, the Hindu puranic story of Manu, through Deucalion in Greek mythology or Utnapishtim in the Epic of Gilgamesh.
Parallels are often drawn between the flood waters of these myths and the primeval waters found in some creation myths since the flood waters are seen to cleanse humanity in preparation for rebirth. Most flood myths also contain a culture hero who strives to ensure this rebirth.

Willis notes global catastrophe in myth is sometimes seen as a deserved punishment inflicted by gods for the folly or wickedness of humankind.

Hebraic Noah's Ark
Likely based on Assyro-Babylonian account of a cosmic deluge.
Greeks – Zeus sends a great inundation to punish humanity for the misdeeds of the Titan Prometheus. Deucalion, the son of Prometheus, builds an ark and survives with his wife Pyrrha to reestablish the human race.
Indian mythology – Manu, the first man, earns the gratitude of a little fish which he saves from being eaten by larger ones. Later instructs Manu on building an ark and stock it with the "seed of all things" and later tows the ark to safety.

Yu the Great. A mythical dragon or else a creator half human and half dragon in form, whose father Gun, had been sent down from heaven to control a flood.

In a mythical version of this story, presented in Wang Jia's 4th century AD work *Shi Yi Ji*, Yu is assisted in his work by a yellow dragon and a black turtle (not necessarily related to the Black Tortoise of Chinese mythology).[13] Another local myth says that Yu created the Sanmenxia "Three Passes Gorge" by cutting a mountain ridge with a divine battle-axe to control flooding.[14]
Traditional stories say that Yu sacrificed a great deal of his body to control the floods. For example, his hands were said to be thickly callused, and his feet were completely covered with callus. In one common story, Yu had only been married only four days when he was given the task of fighting the flood. He said goodbye to his wife, saying that he did not know when he would return. During the 13 years of flooding, he passed by his own family's doorstep three times, but each time he did not return inside his own home. The first time he passed, he heard that his wife was in labor. The second time he passed by, his son could already call out to his father. His family urged him to return home, but he said it was impossible as the flood was still going on. The third time Yu was passing by, his son was older than 10 years old. Each time, Yu refused to go in the door, saying that as the flood was rendering countless numbers of people homeless, he could not rest.

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In Norse mythology, **Thor** (from Old Norse **Þórr**) is a hammer-wielding god associated with thunder, lightning, storms, oak trees, strength, destruction, fertility, healing, and the protection of mankind. Emblems of his hammer, Mjöllnir, were worn in defiance and Norse pagan personal names containing the name of the god bear witness to his popularity.

In Norse mythology, largely recorded in Iceland from traditional material stemming from Scandinavia, numerous tales and information about Thor are provided. In these sources, Thor bears at least fourteen names, is the husband of the golden-haired goddess Sif, is the lover of the jötunn Járnsaxa, and is generally described as fierce-eyed, red-haired and red-bearded.[1]

The same sources list Thor as the son of the god Odin and the personified earth, Fjörgyn, and by way of Odin, Thor has numerous brothers. Thor wields the mountain-crushing hammer, Mjöllnir, wears the belt Megingjörð and the iron gloves Járngreipr, and owns the staff Gríðarvölr.

Thor's exploits, including his relentless slaughter of his foes and fierce battles with the monstrous serpent Jörmungandr—and their foretold mutual deaths during the events of Ragnarök—are recorded throughout sources for Norse mythology.

2012 phenomenon

A date inscription for the Mayan Long Count
The **2012 phenomenon** comprises a range of eschatological beliefs that cataclysmic or transformative events will occur on December 21, 2012.[1][2][3][4] This date is regarded as the end-date of a 5,125-year-long cycle in the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar. Various astronomical alignments and numerological formulae related to this date have been proposed.

A New Age interpretation of this transition postulates that this date marks the start of time in which Earth and its inhabitants may undergo a positive physical or spiritual transformation, and that 2012 may mark the beginning of a new era.[5]

Others suggest that the 2012 date marks the end of the world or a similar catastrophe. Scenarios suggested for the end of the world include the arrival of the next solar maximum, or Earth's collision with a black hole or a passing planet called "Nibiru".

Scholars from various disciplines have dismissed the idea of such cataclysmic events occurring in 2012. Mainstream Mayanist scholars state that predictions of impending doom are not found in any of the extant classic Maya accounts, and that the idea that the Long Count calendar "ends" in 2012 misrepresents Maya history.[3][6] Astronomers and other scientists have rejected the apocalyptic forecasts as pseudoscience, stating that the anticipated events are contradicted by simple astronomical observations.

Viracocha is the great creator god in the pre-Inca and Inca mythology in the Andes region of South America. Viracocha was one of the most important deities in the Inca pantheon and seen as the creator of all things, or the substance from which all things are created, and intimately associated with the sea.[1] Viracocha created the universe, sun, moon and stars, time (by commanding the sun to move over the sky)[2] and civilization itself. Viracocha was worshipped as god of the sun and of storms. He was represented as wearing the sun for a crown, with thunderbolts in his hands, and tears descending from his eyes as rain.

He made the sun, moon, and the stars. He made mankind by breathing into stones, but his first creation were brainless giants that displeased him. So he destroyed it with a flood and made a new, better one from smaller stones.[5] Viracocha eventually disappeared across the Pacific Ocean (by walking on the water), and never returned. He wandered the earth disguised as a beggar, teaching his new creations the basics of civilization, as well as working numerous miracles.

Viracocha had two sons, Imahmana Viracocha and Tocapo Virachocha. After the Great Flood and the Creation, Viracocha sent his sons to visit the tribes to the Northeast and Northwest to determine if they still obeyed his commandments. Viracocha himself traveled North. During their journey, Imaymana and Tocapo gave names to all the trees, flowers, fruits and herbs. They also taught the tribes which of these were edible, which had medicinal properties, and which were poisonous. Eventually, Viracocha, Tocapo and Imahmana arrived at Cuzco (in modern day Peru) and the Pacific seacoast where they walked across the water until they disappeared. The word "Viracocha" literally means "Sea Foam."[7]

Prométhée enchaîné (Prometheus bound). Marble, reception piece for the French Royal Academy, 1762. Nicolas-Sébastien Adam, also known as Adam the Younger.

Throughout world mythology, there are various stories of how fire was brought to the world, usually through trickery or by theft. In Greek mythology, the fire thief was Prometheus, the Titan god of forethought. One version of that myth follows.

Zeus, chief god of all the gods, had tired of the human race. He determined to deny humanity all blessings until the last mortal had died out. Prometheus, however, felt great compassion for humanity. One day he stole fire from Mount Olympus and bestowed it on mankind so that they might have perpetual warmth and light. On the night following the fire theft Zeus looked down from Mount Olympus and saw the glow of many fires. He was so incensed that he chained Prometheus to a mountain where a giant eagle fed on his ever-regenerating liver. Prometheus was an immortal and would have suffered for all eternity had Hercules not rescued him several generations later.

Various tribal stories of the native tribes of the America's describe an Amazon boy stealing fire from the lair of a jaguar; of birds and snakes and finally a female water spider obtaining a precious live coal from the gods for the Cherokee people that was lodged in a hollow sycamore tree; and the Raven along Pacific coast discovering fire. In other discovery stories the coyote, hare, or spider among the Plains people (The Old Man or The Coyote) outwit the enemies of humankind.

Paleo-Indians
(18,000 BCE – 8,000 BCE)Paleo-Indians hunting a glyptodont
Heinrich Harder (1858-1935), c.1920.

The Lithic peoples or *Paleo-Indians* are the earliest known humans of the Americas. The period's name derives from the appearance of "lithic flaked" stone tools.

Glyptodon (Greek for "grooved or carved tooth") was a large, armored mammal of the family Glyptodontidae, a relative of armadillos that lived during the Pleistocene Epoch. It was roughly the same size and weight as a Volkswagen Beetle, though flatter in shape. With its rounded, bony shell and squat limbs, it superficially resembled turtles, and the much earlier dinosaurian ankylosaur, as an example of the convergent evolution of unrelated lineages into similar forms. *Glyptodon* is believed to have been an herbivore, grazing on grasses and other plants found near rivers and small bodies of water.[*citation needed*]

Glyptodon originated in South America. A related genus, *Glyptotherium*, reached the southern region of the modern USA about 2.5 million years ago as a result of the Great American Interchange, a set of migrations that occurred after North and South America were connected by the rising of the volcanic Isthmus of Panama. They became extinct about 10,000 years ago. The native human population in their range is believed to have hunted them and used the shells of dead animals as shelters in inclement weather.[1][2]

Glooscap (also spelled *Gluskabe*,*Glooskap*, *Gluskabi*, *Kluscap*, *Kloskomba*, or *Gluskab*) is a mythical culture hero, and "transformer" of the Wabanaki peoples. He is represented as the creator in the Penobscot Indian Nation's Creation Myth, as transcribed by Joseph Nicola in *The Red Man.*

Glooscap learned that hunters who kill too much would destroy the ecosystem and the good world he had sought to create. Frightened at this possibility, Glooscap sought Grandmother Woodchuck (Agaskw) and asked her for advice. She plucked all the hairs out of her belly (hence the lack of hair on a woodchuck's belly) and wove them into a magical bag. Glooscap put all the game animals into the bag. He then bragged to Grandmother Woodchuck that the humans would never need to hunt again. Grandmother Woodchuck scolded him and told him that they would die without the animals. She said that they needed to hunt in order to remain strong. Glooscap then let the animals go.
Later, Glooscap decided to capture the great bird that Tabaldak had placed on a mountain peak, where it generated bad weather in the flapping of its wings. Glooscap caught the eagle and bound its wings and the winds ceased. Soon, the air was so hot and heavy that Glooscap could not breathe, so he loosened the bird's wings, just enough to generate enough weather so that humanity could live. Modern Abenaki believe that Glooscap is very angry at the white people for not obeying the rules he set down.

When Glooscap slept, Nova Scotia was his bed, and Prince Edward Island his pillow. Glooscap is remembered for having saved the world from an evil frog-monster, who had swallowed all the Earth's water. Glooscap killed the monster and the water was released. Some animals, relieved at the resurgence of water, jumped in, becoming

Eshu (other names include **Exu**, **Esu Eleggua**, **Esu Elegbara**, **Eshu Elegbara**, **Elegba**, **Legba**, **Papa Legba** and **Eleda**) is both an orisha and one of the most well-known deities of the Yoruba mythology and its related New World traditions. He has a wide range of responsibilities: the protector of travelers, deity of roads, particularly crossroads, the deity with the power over fortune and misfortune, and the personification of death, a psychopomp.

Eshu is a spirit of Chaos and Trickery, and plays frequently by leading mortals to temptation and possible tribulation in the hopes that the experience will lead ultimately to their maturation. In this way he is certainly a difficult teacher, but in the end is usually found to be a good one.[2] As an example of this, let us look at one of his *patakis* or stories of the faith.[3] Eshu was walking down a road one day, wearing a hat that was red on one side and black on the other. Sometime after he entered a village which the road went through, the villagers who had seen him began arguing about whether the stranger's hat was black or red. The villagers on one side of the road had only been capable of seeing the black side, and the villagers on the other side had only been capable of seeing the red one. They soon came to blows over the disagreement which caused him to turn back and rebuke them, revealing to them how one's perspective can be as correct as another person's even when they appear to be diametrically opposed to each other. He then left them with a stern warning about how closed-mindedness can cause one to be made a fool. In other versions of this tale, the two halves of the village were not stopped short of extreme violence; they actually annihilated each other, and Eshu laughed at the result, saying "Bringing strife is my greatest joy".

In Africa the personalized animal tricksters (for example, the hare, the spider and the

Achilles sacrificing to Zeus, from the Ambrosian Iliad, a 5th-century illuminated manuscript.

Rosenberg indicates the heroic myths and epics of a society teach its members the appropriate attitudes, behavior, and values of that culture. Heroes are the models of human behavior for their society.

They earn lasting fame—the only kind of immortality for human beings—by performing great deeds to help their community, and inspire others to emulate them.

Heroes are forced by circumstances to make critical choices where they must balance one set of values against competing values.

Heroes are not the same throughout the world and may earn fame in a variety of ways. No hero is perfect, yet their human weaknesses are often instructive.

Many of the greatest heroes cannot accept mortality.

Achilles must choose between death with honor and a long undistinguished life.

Achilles personifies what is best and worst in human nature. As he moves from one crisis to another, he is at his best when he stands apart from his warrior society and questions the values by which he and they live. He is also at his best when he offers compassion and consultation that reveal his profound understanding of the human condition.

Hector brought back to Troy. From a Roman sarcophagus of ca. 180–200 AD.

In Greek mythology, **Hectōr** (Ἕκτωρ, "holding fast"[1]), or **Hektōr**, is a Trojan prince and the greatest fighter for Troy in the Trojan War. He was a prince of the royal house and the heir apparent to his father's throne.. He acts as leader of the Trojans and their allies in the defence of Troy, killing 31 Greek fighters in all.[3] In the European Middle Ages, Hector figures as one of the Nine Worthies noted by Jacques de Longuyon, known not only for his courage but also for his noble and courtly nature. Indeed Homer places Hector as the very noblest of all the heroes in the *Iliad*: he is both peace-loving and brave, thoughtful as well as bold, a good son, husband and father, and without darker motives. When the Trojans are disputing whether the omens are favourable, he retorts: "One omen is best: defending the fatherland" (this is the motto of the Greek Armed Forces to this day).

Hector is forced to choose heroic death because he cannot live with the stain of cowardice. Hector must overcome his fear of Achilles. He fights against a superior foe knowing he will die in the process yet choosing to die with honor rather than to live without self-esteem and public approval.

Hectors death at the hands of Achilles show only that Achilles is the greater warrior. Hector's humane values and his ultimate courage reveal that he is the greater warrior.

The hero myths examine the relationship between the individuals desires and his or her responsibilities to society.

Mural depicting Gesar. Willis cross reference of god as a hero.

The **Epic of King Gesar** (/ˈgɛzər/ or /ˈgɛsər/; Tibetan: , *Ge-sar rGyal-po*, "King Gesar"; Mongolian: Гэсэр Хаан, *Geser Khan*, "King Geser"), also spelled **Geser** (especially in Mongolian contexts) or **Kesar** (/ˈkɛzər/ or /ˈkɛsər/), is an epic cycle, believed to date from the 12th century, that relates the heroic deeds of the culture hero Gesar,[1] the fearless lord of the legendary kingdom of Ling (Tibetan: *gLing*). It is recorded variously in poetry and prose, chantfable being the style of traditional performance,[2] and is sung widely throughout Central Asia. Its classic version is to be found in central Tibet.[3]

The epic is composed of a very large body of versions, each with many variants, and is reputed by some to be the longest in the world.[12] Although there is no one definitive text, the Chinese compilation so far of just its Tibetan versions has filled some 120 volumes, more than one million verses,[13] divided into 29 'chapters'.[14] Western calculations speak of more than 50 different books edited so far in China, India and Tibet.[15]

The epic has a vast number of variants in plot and motifs, but while there is little point in looking for a consistent picture, the core of the story, similar to that of many legendary cycles, has been summed up as follows:
King Ge-sar has a miraculous birth, a despised and neglected childhood, and then becomes ruler and wins his (first) wife ’Brug-mo through a series of marvellous feats. In subsequent episodes he defends his people against various external aggressors, human and superhuman. Instead of dying a normal death he departs into a hidden realm from which he may return at some time in the future to save his people from their enemies.[40]

A hundred thousand years ago, not long after Homo sapiens emerged as a species, a craftsman — or woman — sat in a cave overlooking the Indian Ocean, crushed a soft rusty red rock, mixed it inside a shell with charcoal and animal marrow, and dabbed it on something — maybe a face, maybe a wall.

Before the person left, he or she stacked the shell and grindstones in a neat pile, where they lay undisturbed for a hundred millennia.

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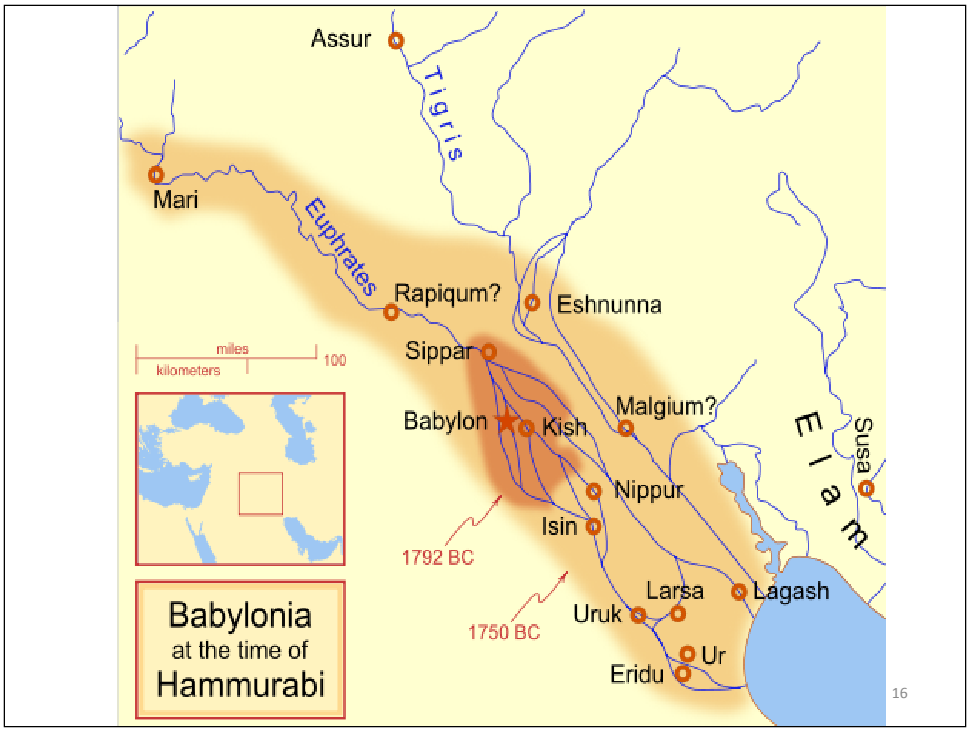
Before the person left, he or she stacked the shell and grindstones in a neat pile, where they lay undisturbed for a hundred millennia.
Unearthed in 2008 and described Friday in the journal Science, these paint “tool kits,” researchers say, push deeper into human history the evidence for artistic impulses and complex, planned behavior. Previously, the oldest evidence of ochre paint was found at another site in South Africa dated to about 60,000 years ago.
“They probably understood basic chemistry,” said Christopher Henshilwood, the archaeologist who led the discovery team.
Traces of paint on the tools show that the cave-dwellers mixed ochre — red or yellow minerals that contain metal oxides — with bone marrow, charcoal, flecks of quartz, and a liquid, probably water. Paint experts at the Louvre in Paris performed the analysis.
With ground ochre as the base, the marrow and charcoal acted as binders. The quartz could have made the compound sticky, with water — in the right amount —

Gilgamesh: The Oldest Story in the World

Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Bull of Heaven
Image Information: "MS in Neo-Assyrian on brown agate, Assyria, ca. 7th c. BC, 1 cylinder seal, h. 3,9 cm, diam. 1,6 cm, with Enkidu, wearing a short kilt decorated with rosettes, hair and beard in curls, an axe in one hand, holding the tail of the Bull of Heaven in the other, the winged human-headed bull crouches down on its foreleg, in front Gilgamesh, wearing long fringed robe with rosettes, a double horned headdress, long curled hair and beard, holding one of the bull's horns while plunging his sword into its neck." Weblink: Schoyen Collection

Gilgamesh was probably a real ruler in the late Early Dynastic II period (ca. 27th century BCE).

Various themes, plot elements, and characters in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* can also be found in the Hebrew Bible in the stories of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (both stories involve a serpent) and the story of Noah and the Flood.
Citing the similarities between the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Hebrew Bible's Flood story, some scholars have argued that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is proof that the stories found in the Hebrew Bible are true because the Babylonians must have copied the



Babylonia in the time of Hammurabi King 1792-1750 BCE Tablets found in ruins of Nineveh on the east bank of the Tigris across from Mosul on the east bank.

Uruk

Uruk was an ancient city of Sumer and later Babylonia. It played a leading role in the early urbanization of Sumer in the mid 4th millennium BCE.

The community was the main force of urbanization during the Uruk period (4000—3200 BCE). This period of 800 years saw a shift from small, agricultural villages to a larger urban center with a full time bureaucracy, military and stratified society.

Uruk was located in the alluvial plain area of southern Mesopotamia. Through the gradual and eventual domestication of native grains from the Zagros foothills and extensive irrigation techniques, the area supported a vast variety of edible vegetation.

Uruk's agricultural surplus and large population base facilitated processes such as **trade**, specialization of crafts and the evolution of writing. Evidence from evacuations such as extensive **pottery** and the earliest known tablets of **writing** support these events.

At its height c. 2900 BCE, Uruk probably had **50,000 to 80,000 residents** living in four square miles of walled area, the largest city in the world at the time.

The semi-mythical king Gilgamesh, according to the chronology presented in the Sumerian king list, ruled Uruk in the 27th century BCE.

The Deluge tablet of the Gilgamesh epic in Akkadian. Age of tablet estimated at 2100 BCE.

Cuneiform Script

The earliest know writing system in the world.

Cuneiform writing emerged in the Sumerian civilization of southern Iraq around **34th Century** BCE during the middle Uruk period, beginning as a pictographic system of writing.

Clay tokens had been used for some form of record-keeping in Mesopotamia since perhaps as early as c. 8,000 BCE, according to some estimates. Cuneiform documents were written on clay tablets, by means of a **reed stylus**.

An Akkadian inscription

Epic Poetry, Ancient Mesopotamia

Epic poetry is a lengthy narrative poem concerning details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. **Oral poetry** can qualify and makes it feasible to remember and pass along from generation to generation.

Earliest epic poems of the 20th to 10th century BCE include ***Epic of Gilgamesh, Atrahasis* and *Enuma Elish*** (all Mesopotamian or Babylonian) covering ancient gods, creation, great floods and history/mythology.

Many scholars believe that the **flood myth** was added to **Tablet XI** in the "standard version" of the Gilgamesh Epic by the editor who utilized the flood story from the Epic of **Atrahasis**.

Gilgamesh Tablets

The **earliest Sumerian Gilgamesh poems** are now considered to be **distinct stories** rather then constituting a single epic. They date from the Third Dynasty of Ur **(2150-2000 BCE**).

The earliest Akkadian versions are dated to the early 2nd millennium, most likely in the 18th or 17th century BCE, when one or more scholars used existing library material to form the epic. The "**standard**" **Akkaidian version** consisting of **12 tablets** was edited by **Sin-liqe-unninni** sometime between **1300 and 1000 BC**.

As of now, with 73 fragments discovered, slightly fewer than **two thousand of the three thousand lines** of the original text exist in readable, continuous form; the rest are damaged or missing, and there are many gaps in the sections that survived.

The tablets were found in the ruins of the **library of Ashurbanipal**, last great king of

Gilgamesh

The story revolves around a relationship between **Gilgamesh** and his close companion, **Enkidu**. Enkidu is a wild man created by the gods as Gilgamesh's equal to distract him from oppressing the citizens of Uruk.

Together they undertake **dangerous quests** that incur the displeasure of the gods. First, they journey to the **Cedar Mountain to defeat Humbaba**, its monstrous guardian. Later they kill the **Bull of Heaven** that the goddess Ishtar has sent to punish Gilgamesh for spurning her advances.

The latter part of the epic focuses on Gilgamesh's distressed reaction to **Enkidu's death**, which takes the form of a **quest for immortality.** Gilgamesh attempts to learn the **secret of eternal life** by undertaking a long and perilous journey to meet the immortal flood hero Utnapishtim.

Ultimately the poignant words addressed to Gilgamesh in the midst of his quest foreshadow the end result: "**That life that you are seeking you will never find**. When the gods created man they allocated to him death, but life they retained for their own keeping."

Gilgamesh, however, was celebrated by posterity for his building achievements, and for bringing back long-lost cultic knowledge to Uruk as a result of his meeting with Utnapishtim.

Stephen Mitchell on the Oldest Story in the World1

Mitchell comments "Part of the fascination of *Gilgamesh* is that, like any great work of literature, **it has much to tell us about ourselves**. In giving **voice to grief and the fear of death**, perhaps more powerfully than any book written after it, in portraying love and vulnerability and the quest for wisdom, it has become a personal testimony

Gilgamesh

Prologue

The prologue written by "**Sin-liqe-unninni**" tells of a hero's journey with its huge uninhibited mythic presences moving through a landscape of dream.

Gilgamesh shows how a man becomes civilized, how he learns to rule himself and therefore his people and to act with temperance, wisdom and piety.

READING PAGE 69-70

The poem begins with the city and ends with it.

Book I

Surpassing all kings, powerful and tall…

Two thirds divine, one third human

But to begin with, he is manic and a tyrant

He oppresses young men, perhaps with forced labor or military service

Oppresses the young women, perhaps with his ravenous sexual appetite

Because he is an absolute monarch, no one dares to criticize him

Gilgamesh, the man of unsurpassable courage and inexhaustible energy, has become a monster of selfishness.

Enkidu and Gilgamesh

Enkidu and Shamhat travel to Uruk. Enkidu's heart sang with joy and he became fully human. He had his hair cut. He guarded the shepherds' flocks at night and chased off lions and wolves.

He met a man who was on his way to a wedding. The priest will bless the young couple, but Enkidu learns it is **Gilgamesh, king of the great-walled city** Uruk who **mates first with the lawful wife**. This is the order the gods have decreed.

Enkidu's face went pale with anger. **I will challenge him**! He stood like a boulder at the door of the bride. Gilgamesh and Enkidu fought like wild bulls, doorposts trembled, they careened through the streets. Finally Gilgamesh threw the wild man and with his right knee pinned him to the ground. Gilgamesh's anger left him.

Enkidu said: "Your mother, the goddess Ninsun, made you stronger and braver than any mortal. You are destined to rule over men.

They embraced and kissed. They held hands like brothers.
They walked side by side. They became true friends.

Gilgamesh knows that **what he dreamed has come true**. **The dear friend and mighty hero has appeared**, the longed for companion of his heart, **the man who will stand at his side through the greatest dangers.**

Humbaba

Book V. The battle is over quickly. Humbaba is about to overwhelm the two heroes. Shamash, the sun god, sends mighty winds that pin Humbaba down and paralyze him. Shamash wants Humbaba defeated but not destroyed.

Humbaba begs both heroes for mercy. Gilgamesh hesitates; Enkidu has no doubts, even though he is aware that killing him will enrage not only Enlil, chief deity, Lord of the Open, Lord of the Wind, but their own protector Shamash as well.

Enkidu said: Page 126 bottom

Dear friend, quickly
before another moment goes by,
kill Humbaba, don't listen to his words,
don't hesitate, slaughter him, slit his throat,
before the great god Enlil can stop us,
before the great gods can get enraged,
Enlil in Nipper, Shamash in Larsa,
Establish your fame, so that forever
men will speak of brave Gilgamesh,
who killed Humbaba in the Cedar Forest.

Enkidu is morally responsible for persuading his friend not to spare the monster's life; therefore his own life becomes forfeit. When Gilgamesh kills Humbaba, the poet says, **a gentle rain falls unto the mountains, as if the heavens themselves are weeping for the consequences of that act**

Ishtar holding her weapon, Louvre Museum.

Book VI

Book VI is a separable episode that could be omitted without any loss of continuity. It is a comic interlude, vulgar, high-spirited, irreverent and rambunctious, letting loose energies but with twists and some sense of put downs of the feminine that seems out of context.

Almost all the female characters in *Gilgamesh* are portrayed as admirable: intelligent, generous, compassionate. The one exception is Ishtar, goddess of love and patron deity of Uruk, known in Mesopotamian culture as Inanna, the Queen of Heaven.

She is rejected, insulted, threatened and humiliated by both Gilgamesh and Enkidu. This is surprising in a poem that mentions her temple with reverence and makes one of her priestesses a central character in the initial drama.

But there is another side to the beloved goddess who brought culture and fertility to her people in Sumer. She is also the goddess of war, and she can be selfish, arbitrary and brutal.

We just do not know why the abusive portrayal of our heroes toward Ishtar. Is it symptomatic of a religious movement among first the Sumerians and later the Babylonians to displace her with a male deity? Why the metaphorical insults, the catalogue of several black-widow affairs in which she turned against her lover and harmed him?

Is Gilgamesh's response a frightened male reaction to a woman who takes the sexual initiative? Is Ishtar a murderous spoiled brat, exploding with tears of rage and frustration and throwing a tantrum until Anu lends her the Bull of Heaven to kill Gilgamesh and destroy his palace?

Bull heads excavated from Çatalhöyük in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu easily kill the Bull of Heaven. Enkidu rips off one of the Bull's thighs and flings it in Ishtar's face; she has no one to avenge her. Comments***Page 38, 39 and 40 Highlights

Enkidu

Book VII
Death and Departure

Enkidu dream one, they have offended the gods, one must die. ***Page 141,top 142.

Enkidu dream two, how Mesopotamians imagine the dead. ***Dream two page 143-144

Enkidu curses the trapper, curses Shamhat for taking him out of the wilderness (It never occurs to him to curse Gilgamesh as well, though this was Gilgamesh's idea).

Shamash, the sun god, provides Enkidu with a more balanced view that calms his "raging heart." Civilization, the god points out, has been just as much a paradise for Enkidu as the wilderness was. And wasn't it Shamhat who brought Enkidu the greatest joy of all, his friendship with Gilgamesh? Enkidu acknowledges this and turns his curse into a blessing.

After 12 days of agony, Enkidu dies and leaves Gilgamesh alone with his grief. One might say his death was caused by Gilgamesh's monster-hunting, but more accurately, Enkidu caused his own death by insisting that Gilgamesh kill Humbaba; it they had let the monster live all would have been well. Neither recognized this, the pathos of the situation.

Gilgamesh

Book VIII

Gilgamesh's lament: ***bottom 152 top 153, mid-153

"My beloved friend is dead, he is dead,
my beloved brother is dead, I will mourn
as long as I breathe, I will sob for him
like a woman who has lost her only child."

"Beloved friend, swift stallion, wild deer,
leopard ranging in the wilderness—
together we crossed the mountains, together
we slaughtered the Bull of Heaven, we killed
Humbaba, who guarded the Cedar Forest."

He met Utnapishtim (The Summerian Noah) at the source of the waters of immortality. British Museum.

He is standing face to face with the man who is his last hope. The old man listens and says:*** p 178, 179

When there is no way out, you just follow the way in front of you

The archetypal hero
Being called to action
Meeting a wise man or guide
Crossing the threshold to the numinous world of the adventure
Passing various tests, attaining the goal
Defeating the forces of evil, going back home
A spiritual transformation at the end
He has suffered, he has triumphed, he is at peace

The Gilgamesh epic is more complex and quirky

Gilgamesh does slay the monster, but that, it turns out, is a violation of the divine order of things and results in the death of his beloved friend.

The wise man says Gilgamesh should realize how fortunate he is, that life is short and death is final. Accept things as they are. But we can't accept things as they are, so long as we think things should be different.

But author Mitchell suggests, "There is no consolation in platitudes, and for Utnapishtim to tell Gilgamesh that he is going to die seems as tactless as it was for St. Paul to tell the Thessalonians that they were not going to die."

Gilgamesh

A Return to the Beginning

We know that for the first time he is acting as a responsible, compassionate king, a benefactor to his people and their descendents.

Out of the depths, somehow Gilgamesh has managed to “close the gates of sorrow;” he has learned to rule himself and his city without violence, selfishness or the compulsions of restless heart.

Gilgamesh has become wise.

He has absorbed the deeper wisdom of the poem’s narrative voice, a voice that is impartial, humorous, civilized, sexual, irreverent, skeptical of moral absolutes, delighted with the things of this world and supremely confident in the power of its own language