

Minor Research Project Entitled:

***“The Epic of Gilgamesh:***  
**A Study in Archetypal Psychology”**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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# ***“The Epic of Gilgamesh: A Study in Archetypal Psychology”***

“Great art till now has always derived its fruitfulness from the myth, from the unconscious process of symbolization which continues through the ages and which, as the primordial manifestation of the human spirit, will continue to be the root of all creation in future”

C.G. Jung: *The Undiscovered Self*

## Preface

The present research aims at a reinterpretation of the Gilgamesh epic with the help of critical theories usually classified as “myth criticism”, “Archetypal criticism”, and more particularly “Archetypal Psychology”. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Carl Gustav Jung, Mircea Eliade and a host of other scholars started the analysis of human psyche from a fresh perspective. In Jung's psychology an archetype is an inherited pattern of thought or symbolic imagery derived from the past collective experience and present in the individual unconscious. These scholars studied how the hierarchy of ancient gods, polytheistic religions, and archetypal ideas found in tales might influence modern life with regard to soul, psyche, dreams and the Self. They put forth theories about how ancient myths, legends, sagas, and religions mimicked some of the broad impulses and drives in the psyche. In the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the followers of Jung's theory made further developments in this approach. Archetypal psychology as a basis for developing theory, and especially, down-to-earth applications, is ongoing and evolving constantly. More recently, James Hillman evolved his own theory of Archetypal Psychology, relativizing and deliteralizing the ego and focussing on the *psyche*, or soul, itself and

the *archai*, the deepest patterns of psychic functioning. The proposed study will attempt to analyse the *Epic of Gilgamesh* with the help of these theories to bring out the significant aspects of the text which have remained hitherto undiscovered. The present study is outlined in the following manner

- I) Introduction to the Sumerian text, people, and civilization
- II) An overview of the critical method
- III) Plot of the narrative
- IV) Analysis of the text

## **Introduction to the Sumerian text, people, and civilization**

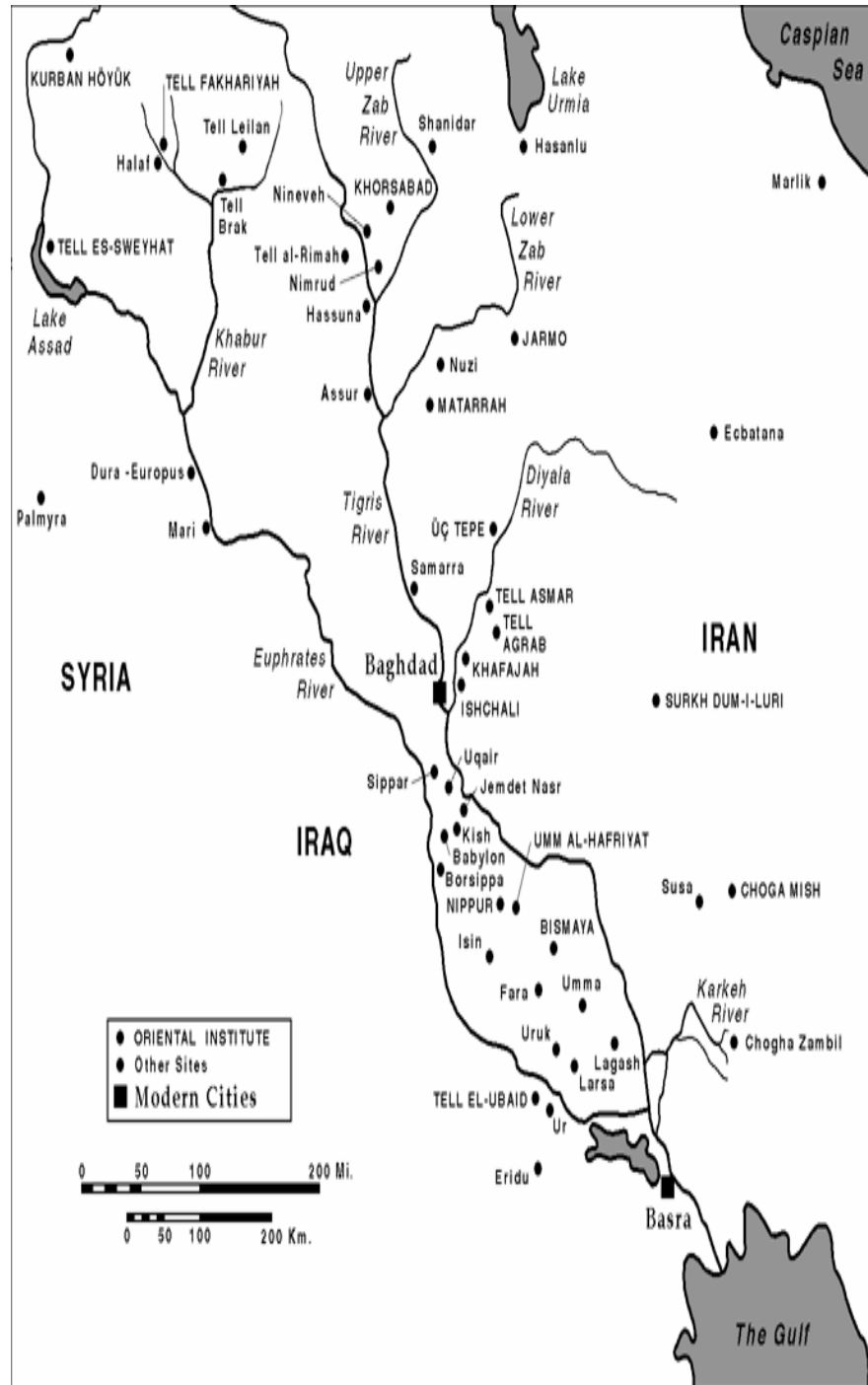
The manuscripts of this epic are cuneiform tablets. The cuneiform tablets are smooth and rectangular shaped tablets of clay. The inscription or engraving is on both the sides of the tablets. The archeological excavations in Iraq have brought forth many tablets containing the Gilgamesh epic. Finally, there are twelve tablets of the epic. Each of these tablets consists of six columns. Three columns are engraved on one side and three are engraved on the reverse side. Each column has 50 lines which makes the total of nearly 3600 lines. Many of the tablets (nearly more than the half of the total) are from the collection of Nineveh. Nineveh site has the palace of King Ashurbanapal whose dates can be fixed between 668 to 626 BC. The tablets belong to the collection of this king's library which was discovered in 1854 by Layard. Additionally, many tablets were brought together by George Smith.

The tablets of this epic come from several places in Iraq. These are the sites of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia. The cuneiform writing is said to have been invented in the ancient Mesopotamian civilization around the time 3000-3500 BCE. Historically this civilization (which is called as the Sumerian civilization) is the earliest

known civilization. This claim to be the earliest civilization can be supported basing the concept of civilization on two requirements – the administrative system of city state and the development of a written script. It can be seen that different other civilizations were also developing at the same time in other places like China, Egypt and the South American continent. The Sumerian civilization made considerable progress in different fields of knowledge viz. astronomy and mathematics. The development of the written script seems to have originated from the need to record figures and other details, because there were big city states and many matters concerned with trade and administration could not be simply relied to human memory. The system of writing that was developed in Sumer was capable of expressing great ideas. All the matters that required a written record were put in the cuneiform on the clay tablets. The writings on the clay tablets have withstood the test of time because these tablets are sturdy. The excavations have unearthed thousands of tablets from sites of this civilization and many things like the accountant's record etc, pertaining to various small as well as important administrative affairs are intactly preserved on these tablets.



## The Sumerian Civilization



Source:

<http://faculty.gvsu.edu/websterm/SumerianMyth.htm>

Prior to the settlement of the Sumerian people in this territory called as Mesopotamia (called so because the land is located between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and the ancient Greek term Mesopotamia means 'the land between rivers') the Ubadaidian people were living there. They had settled between 4500 and 4000 BCE. These people first introduced agriculture in this area. They also had small handicraft industry that manufactured metal works, leather goods, pottery etc. they developed trade based on this industry. This region had very little rainfall, therefore irrigation was very important for agriculture. The Sumerian people built embankments for controlling the floodwaters of the Euphrates river. They also formed ditches and constructed canals. The maintenance of canals and distribution of water required a well formed government system which the Sumerians developed. The irrigation system made it possible to have surplus crop production that brought prosperity to the land. With the prosperity came the development of arts in these city states because now the artists could survive on this surplus food production. The city states thus started comprising of a fair number of craftsmen, artists and traders. The living pattern of the people also changed. A well defined social structure came into existence. The villages of the Sumerians were built on artificial mounds so that they could be protected from floods. They

mastered the art of making bricks from clay and built kilns for this purpose.

The houses of the Sumerians were organized alongside narrow lanes. The constructions were sturdy and sometimes two storied. The main cities were surrounded with high walls for protection but people also lived outside the walls. Those living outside the walls were poor people and their houses were huts made from reeds and clay. A city had its own god and the temple of this god was located at the centre of the city. The temple was a symbol of the city's prestige and wealth therefore it was built on a high raised ground to be reached by stairs. The temple tower was called as holy mountain or ziggurat. All other houses were located on the grounds surrounding the temple. These included the houses of important officials, musicians, singers, priests, accountants etc. who were the prominent citizens. There were also the store houses for grains and weapons. The animals to be sacrificed to the gods were housed in the pens on the temple grounds.

The people had domesticated sheep, goats, oxen donkeys and dogs but horses and camels were not known to them. They had the knowledge of the wheel and they used it for carts and making pottery. Similarly, they also had invented the plow. The movement of heavy

goods was done by carts pulled by the oxen. Oxen were also used for pulling the plow. Weapons were made from bronze which was manufactured by smelting copper with tin. There was traffic on the rivers and canals. Boats moved with heavy goods. Some findings show that these boats had gone as far as the Indus river valley.

It is often indicated that the writing system of the Sumerians is the oldest known writing system. In this way the Sumerian literature becomes the most ancient literature. In the beginning it was a pictorial script similar to the Egyptian hieroglyphical writing. Later on the cuneiform was developed. It was found easier to impress the soft clay with a line rather than scratching it. A straight piece of reed with a three – cornered end was used as a stylus. The stylus could best produce triangular forms and straight lines and therefore the curved lines for a picture were to be broken into series of straight lines. In this way the pictures became stylized Symbols. The triangular forms were wedge shaped. The latin word for wedge is ‘cuneus’, hence the script is called as cuneiform writing. These cuneiforms were then associated with the sound that signified an object. Thus each sign was the representation of ‘a syllable’. In this way the cuneiform system of writing was developed.

The documents discovered in the cuneiform writings are of various types. These indicate that the Sumerian people kept record of many things. There was a strong sense of private property and hence records have been kept about every object owned by the individual or the family. There were scribes who rendered their services for making cuneiform records. The seal of the owner was then stamped on the tablet. The Sumerian people had made advancement in arithmetic. Therefore the cuneiform tablets have mathematical and astronomical accounts. The cuneiform writings also have records of business transactions. In addition, the cuneiform tablets reveal religious writings such as prayers and incantations. There are various types of letters and orders found in the form of cuneiform tablets. The numerous narratives found in the cuneiform tablets give a fair idea about the Sumerian literature. In addition it also helps us understand about the other cultures because the Semitic languages of the Babylonian and Assyrian people were also started to be expressed in cuneiform and the communities of Syria, Anatolia, Armenia, and Iran made use of this script.

The land that is called as Mesopotamia had people of diverse ethnicity. Along with the Sumerians, the Semite, Indo – European and

other groups of people also populated this area. The Semites lived their life largely as nomadic herdsmen. Some Semites adapted to the city life established by the Sumerians but they dwelt in villages or the suburbs of the city. They provided livestock to feed the city. Many Semites were assimilated into the city. Today the Sumerian people are not prominent groups recognized by history. The Sumerian language had monosyllabic words. This language is not related to any known language. It does not survive in any community. This fact can be contracted to the traditions of other groups in this area. The tradition of the Arabs and Jews can be traced back to the Semites. These can also be related to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Palestinian and Egyptian people. The other group – that of the Indo – European, is also well known for carrying down its tradition from the ancient times. The reason for this break in the tradition or the end of Sumerian language may be related to the fact that later on the Sumerian people were replaced by the Semites. The political and religious leadership in Mesopotamia went into the hands of the Semites. Their influence increased gradually and the language of Sumerian people was no longer in use by 1800 BC. It was only kept for sacred texts and royal communications. Later on, this language became extinct.

As mentioned earlier, the Sumerian city had a principal deity. The people of the one city worked out relationship of their own deity with the deities of other cities. A hierarchy of gods was later developed. Some gods were regarded to be one, addressed or known by different names. The city of Uruk that is the setting for the Epic of Gilgamesh had the temple of Anu in its centre. Anu was the city god of Uruk. He was the god of the heavens and the greatest of all the gods. Other important god was Enlil the god of storm and also like Anu, Enlil has an important role to play in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Enlil figures also in the origin myth of the Sumerian people. According to this myth there was water everywhere in the world in the beginning. It was a watery chaos whose mother was an immense dragon named Tiamat. Then the gods decided to bring order out of this Chaos. Tiamat opposed this and created an army of dragons. At this time Enlil summoned the help of his winds. When Tiamat came in confrontation, Enlil pushed the winds in the wide open mouth of Tiamat. This swelled up Tiamat's body and she could not move. Enlil then split her body and made two parts out of it. Half of the body was made flat to form the earth. The other half was shaped like the arch and heavens were made out of it. Then Tiamat's husband was beheaded. His blood was mixed with clay to make the human beings.

Though the Epic of Gilgamesh tells the story of Sumerian people, the text of this narrative has not fully been found to be surviving in the Sumerian language. However, the text in Akkadian, a Semitic language, has survived in the form of twelve tablet. This can be dated back to the period 700 BC. That was the last period of the Akkadian Empire. The Persians destroyed the Akkadian city Ninevah in 612 BC. The Epic of Gilgamesh is recovered from the excavations on the site of this city Ninevah. The Gilgamesh epic was wiped out from the course of history because the Persians destroyed the old religion. The old myths and other stories associated with the religion also disappeared. The Persians established a new culture in the area.

There is evidence that though the full versions discovered belong to the period around 700 BCE, the narratives of Gilgamesh were started to be written in the early period of the second millennium BCE. These versions are not available and they may have been destroyed. The most complete version is recorded on the tablets that come from the collection of the king Assurbanipal/Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) of Assyrian Empire. He was the last strong king of this empire and after his death this vast empire moved on the road to destruction by enemies – the Mesopotamians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, medes, Persians,



Seythians and Cimmerians, Assurbanipal had an impressive collection of texts of all kinds in the form of clay tablets in his library at Ninevah. Thousands of clay tablets have been recovered intact from this library and are now kept in the British Museum at London. It is said that the library of this king gave inspiration to Alexander the Great to create his own great library of Alexandria.

The epic of Gilgamesh was first discovered by Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817 - 1894) in 1851 who was an English traveler as well as an archeologist, cluneiformist and art historian. Layard uncovered the library of Assurbanipal in Ninevah and sent the clay tablets to the British Museum. The vastness and variety of Assurbanipal's collection can be surmised from the fact that Layard found over twenty five thousand tablets in this excavation. The king Assurbanipal had sent his men to various parts of his kingdom to collect the various types of documents. After getting these, he had them rewritten or inscribed again on the tablets. The tablets containing Gilgamesh epic are also inscribed on the orders of Assurbanipal. These were actually excavated by Hormuzed Rassam (1826-1910) who was collaborating with Layard in the work of excavation at the Ninevah site. Rasson was a native Assyrian and Christian Assyriologist and he is credited with the

discovery of the tablets containing the Epic of Gilgamesh. However, this narrative epic did not gain immediate popularity after its decipherment. The work of deciphering was done by Henry Rawlinson and his assistant George Smith. In 1872, George Smith declared that he had found an account of the great flood or deluge in the tablets from Ninevah. This aroused immediate interest in the contents of the tablets because of the similar account of deluge contained in the Holy Bible. George Smith was sent to the Ninevah site by the British Museum to carry out further excavations. Smith succeeded in finding out more tablets at the site and the gaps in the descriptions on other tablets were nearly filled by Smith's discoveries. In this way George Smith (1840-1876), the English Assyriologist is to be credited with the first translation of this great epic. Further additions to the knowledge about the Epic of Gilgamesh were made by the expeditions carried out between 1889 and 1898 by Reverend John Punnelt Peters, University of Pennsylvania Professor of Hebrew. These excavations were carried out at the site of the ancient city of Nippur located in the Southern part of Iraq. From these excavation some tablets in Sumerian language were found. These tablets contained a version of the Epic of Gilgamesh. There are other versions which were found at various sites viz. Anatolia or Asia Minor, Ugarit on the Syrian coast, Megiddo in Palestine. These

are in different languages like Semitic Akkadian & Indo – European Hittite. These are all fragmentary works. Some are the poems concerning Gilgamesh. The complete story survives only in the tablets recovered from the library of Assurbanipal. According to N. K. Sandars, “ While no element of the story can be later than the destruction of Nineveh in the seventh century, a recurring situation typical of the third millennium is discernible behind much of the action, and probably provided its context. Behind this again the tradition reaches back into a preliterate age on the borderline of legend and history, a little later than the Deluge, when gods were replaced by mortals on the thrones of the city – states. This was the age of the Archaic Sumerian civilization ” (13)

## **An overview of the critical method**

It has been more than a century since psychoanalytic comments on literature, human nature, and society gained critical attention. Today, the psychoanalytical approach of literary criticism has become a richly diversified field with a number of critics like Harold Bloom, Norman Holland, Charles Mauron, Jacques Lacan, and others building up their own distinctive theories. American psychologist James Hillman (1926-2011) is one of the prominent theorists that have played a key role in the contemporary development of psychoanalytical criticism. The present study offers a brief explication of some major concepts from Hillman's theory of 'Archetypal Psychology'. However, before embarking on the discussion of Hillman's concepts, it is essential to take a brief overview of the most important developments in the field of psychoanalysis that have preceded and also contributed to the development of Hillman's theory.

Modern psychoanalysis started with Freud who succeeded in transforming Psychology from a branch of Philosophy to a scientific discipline. In its initial stage of development, the classical psychoanalysis focused on explanation of events as 'conscious' or 'unconscious'. Significant concepts regarding the structure and

function of mind were developed by Freud. His work provided insight into neurosis, dreams, jokes, and artistic creativity. More important is the fact that Freud's work paved way for understanding child development in which specific stages were marked to the formation of a 'character' of the adult. Freud later progressed beyond the division of the 'conscious' and the 'unconscious' to recognize that the workings of the mind involved the interactions of 'id', 'superego', 'reality' and 'repetition compulsion' under the control of the 'ego'.

Freud's disciple Jung furthered the study with his theories that differed from his teacher's. He presented the concept of the 'collective unconscious' which was an advancement on Freud's idea of the personal unconscious. The 'collective unconscious' consisted of the primeval imprinting and basic patterns of human life. These were recognized to be the 'archetypes'. The archetypes were noticed to be present in literary types like myths and fairy tales. The archetypes are the basic patterns which give rise to the development of complexes in the human psyche. Jung's Analytical psychology becomes highly relevant in today's globalized world as it helps us understand personality development, relationship conflicts and other psychological problems. James Hillman has been inspired to a great extent by Jung's

theory of archetypes though Hillman's theories are unique and he is regarded to be one of the most original theorists of the contemporary times. In 1970's Hillman began propounding this theory of "Archetypal Psychology" mainly because he was dissatisfied with the way in which Psychoanalysis had shaped up. He proposed to enlarge the scope of this scientific model beyond the clinical inquiry to include arts , culture, and the history of ideas and named it "Archetypal". Hillman has explained this nomenclature in his *Archetypal Psychology*,

"Archetypal" belongs to all culture, all forms of human activity, and not only to professional practitioners of modern therapeutics. By traditional definition, archetypes are the primary forms that govern the psyche. But they cannot be contained only by the psyche, since they manifest as well in the physical, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and spiritual modes. Thus Archetypal Psychology's first links are with culture and imagination rather than with medical and empirical psychologies, which tend to confine psychology to the positivistic manifestations of the nineteenth-century condition of the soul. (13)

Hillman's works explicate his theory of Archetypal Psychology and its application. A brief review of some of the most important works may give us a lucid idea about Archetypal Psychology. In presenting this theory and the various concepts associated with it, Hillman's main purpose is to dissociate the psychic phenomena from the analytical mind and to underline the significance of Mythic, Polytheistic approach to these phenomena. The fundamentals of Hillman's theory have been explicated in the 1972 text *The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology*, the book version of lectures delivered by Hillman in the 1960s. Here Hillman's contention is that modern psychology has been distorting the psyche into a belief that there is something 'wrong' with it; psychology should instead move the psyche 'into life', for Hillman, "Moving the psyche into life means moving it, not from its sickness, but from its sick view of itself as being in need of professional care and knowledge and professional love" (3). The psyche suffers and also falls ill but according to Hillman, the helping professions like psychotherapy must locate the sickness in the 'soul' in order to cure it. Whatever is labeled to be 'wrong' with the psyche- the fantasies, feelings, and behavior associated with these – arises from the 'imaginal' part of ourselves; these are archetypal in their sickness and thus are natural.

Hillman's most popular book that featured on the New York Times Bestseller list in 1996, *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* expounds the 'Acorn theory'. This theory, taking off from Plato's idea of the 'daimon' (soul companion) and Plotinus' idea about 'moirai' (fate, task allowed by the gods) says that there is always a certain urge in all of us. This urge calls us on to a particular path. The subject of *The Soul's Code* is that urge or that call which makes a difference in the lives of the human beings. The happenings in life have a hand of fate. Despite the turn of events in our childhood (these events may not be favourable), the human beings bear a definite individual character with some enduring traits right from the start of life. Psychological theories focus on the traumatic events in the childhood. Hillman tries to locate something more than these events in the childhood. He tries to establish that there is a sense of personal calling. This sense of personal calling is the reason why a human being is alive. Hillman clarifies that he is not speaking about the meaning of life in general or a philosophy of religious faith. His focus is on the unique reason because of which people do what they do in their life. He says that everyone is answerable to an 'innate image', which is the focus of *The Soul's Code*. This innate image cannot be found unless we have an appropriate psychological theory that grants primary psychological



reality to the call of fate. Hillman sets aside the paradigms of ‘genetics’ and ‘environment’, which are primarily used for understanding human life. He does so because these paradigms have been found to be creating a ‘victim mentality’. Hillman is of the view that today we have become the victims of all these paradigms set by psychology (academic, scientific and even therapeutic). These paradigms are to be set aside because they do not account for the ‘sense of calling’. In the opening chapter of *The Soul’s Code* Hillman mentions the four topics of his focus: calling, fate, character, and innate image.

For Hillman, the individual person is not a process or development but an essential image that develops. A person is born with a character. The character is a gift from the ‘guardians’ ( a concept based on Plato’s theory mentioned in the *Republic*) . The guardian or ‘daimon’ is the soul companion given to each individual human being before the time of his/her time of birth .The human being forgets the daimon in the process of arrival and mistakenly believes that each one has come alone in this world. But the fact is that , from the time preceding the birth, the daimon has selected a pattern according to which a person has to live. Hillman’s theory gives a great importance to myth. For example, in *The Soul’s Code*, he mentions the myth of ‘Er’

and states that “the myth has a redemptive psychological function, and a psychology derived from it can inspire a life founded on it”(8). Hillman points out the paradox that though the concept of individualized soul image has a long history, contemporary psychology and psychiatry do not include it in the field of their studies. Actually ‘psyche’ or ‘soul’ is the core subject of psychology the discipline omits the study of its core. Hillman refers to the appearance of the idea of individualized soul in diverse cultures at various times in the history. He uses multiple terms to present his central concept: ‘the acorn’, ‘image’, ‘character’, ‘fate’, ‘genius’, ‘calling’, ‘daimon’, ‘soul’, ‘destiny’. He does not want to limit the understanding of this complex phenomenon to narrow definitions. It is the function of Psychology to locate the soul and to recover world as the place of the soul. For Hillman the soul is not a thing but rather a perspective whose primary activity is imagining. This imaginative activity is important because through this activity one’s world is animated. Recovering the world for the soul is termed as ‘soul making’ by Hillman. In his *The Myth of Analysis* he reiterates that “...psychological work must be rethought. If soul- making is not treatment, not therapy, not even a process of self-realization but is essentially an imaginative activity or an activity of the imaginal realm...then the professional is confronted with reflecting

upon himself and his work”(7). In this text Hillman first points out how the ideas of the unconscious and psychopathology emerged out of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century , and reflects from the archetypal point of view upon the language of psychology, especially the terms used for the imaginal phenomena. He shows how the enlightened egoization of the psyche replaced the imaginal power of the psyche with the concept of the unconscious. Hillman also approaches the mytheme of female inferiority in this text. When the conscious is equated with ‘light’ there has to be an opposite –‘the darkness’ for expressing it. This opposite is always the inferior and traditionally it is equated with the ‘female’ from the perspective of the Jewish, Greek and Christian traditions on which the Western mindset is built. Basically, Hillman challenges this way of thinking in terms of oppositions or dualities and stresses the need of not getting caught up in this habit. Both, the subjective and the objective are embodied in images and imagination. The imaginal realm contains the human as well as the divine. Therefore Hillman is against the idea of one sided perception of the human existence. If such one sided interpretation is carried out, the reality of the soul-world is lost. The subjective can never be neglected according to this viewpoint. Moreover, the subjective has to be extended for inclusion of the impersonal. The soul

has to be made capable of negotiating the contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities of life. For this purpose mythical parallels prove to be of great use.

Hillman's Pulitzer Prize winning *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975) is a seminal text in the tradition of Archetypal Psychology, that helps us grasp Hillman's concepts more clearly. Here Hillman's agenda is "To restore the mythical perspective to depth psychology by recognizing the soul's intrinsic affinity with, nay, love for the Gods....to reaffirm the tragic connection between the mortal and the immortal, that natural plight of the soul that lies at the base of any psychology claiming to speak of psyche" (xi). Hillman explains the task of 'soul-making' here. For this to happen, 'personification' is a powerful tool. Personification is used to challenge the demarcation between 'living subjects' and 'dead objects'. By using personification, we can endow sacredness to the objects of imagination and we can return life to them. Hillman cautions us not to regard personification as inferior. In a truly Romantic spirit, he emphasizes the use of personification for gaining a deep insight into the psychological reality of a person. For Re-Visioning psychology, it is necessary to change the way we look at psychopathology. The scientific model views

psychopathology as implying negative conditions like disruption of the social nexus and frustrated spiritual development. Hillman wants us to be free of these negative connotations associated with psychopathology. He would rather go with Freud who considered the fact that the symptoms are a natural part of the regular expression of the soul. Hillman refers to the later works of Freud and Jung, *Moses and Monotheism* , and *Answer to Job* for emphasizing the need to bridge psychology with religion. This need to relate to religion is an important feature of Hillman's theory. He points out in *Re-Visioning Psychology* that Psychology has failed because it has taken its instruments from other disciplines like economics, medicine etc. but has excluded religion; this is " ...an astounding neglect in view of the fact that it was always to religion that the soul belonged. Yet not so astounding, since psychology has also forgotten that it was study of the soul"( 226). The two works of Freud and Jung mentioned by Hillman prove his point that in the later phase of their work, both these great psychologists recognized the need to align psychology with religion. Hillman's full length study on this topic *In Search: Psychology and Religion* explicates these points further.

In *In Search: Psychology and Religion*(1994), Hillman starts with what is meant by 'real life' and simplifies this complex term by stating,

“...real life means simply human being, ourselves, and other people. In these encounters with ourselves and with others, we fail and are failed. As time goes on, the mounting tragedy over what happens in life means in part what God, fate, and circumstances have brought about, but more it means what happens in the relationships with other people.”(15)

Hillman brings out the fallacy that whenever there is a problem in a human being's life, psychology views the human being as a problem. Then the analysts, counselors and social workers set out to solve this problem. According to Hillman, a psychological problem is also a major religious problem. It is the failure or the obstacles faced by one in the search for the soul and for the belief in its reality. This means, in simple terms, finding a living connection with one's own psychic reality. Hillman feels that analytical psychology can be of help in this. Ignorance and moralisms damaged the handling of the psyche in the nineteenth century. Twentieth century onwards, the "soul" is being gradually replaced by 'psyche' and consequently, a sort of

professionalism has emerged. Hillman strongly asserts that psyche cannot replace the soul and professionalism cannot substitute for vocation. He wants freedom from this professionalism because soul-work can only be completed by one who views his/her task as vocation.

Hillman's *Healing Fiction* (1994) makes a very important statement that the very act of psychological healing is 'fictional' and the 'fiction' constitutes healing. Referring to Freud, Hillman asks why Freud got himself tangled between the medical and the literary when trying to write psychological case reports. He answers the question by saying, "Freud tangled the two because he was engaged in both at once: fiction and case history, and ever since then in the history of our field, they are inseparable, our case histories are a way of writing fiction" (5). In each of his texts, Hillman has pointed out the lacunas of modern psychotherapy; in *Healing Fiction*, one such shortcoming is exposed. Hillman points out, "The core mistake in psychology is that it literalizes functions and actions as discrete moving parts, separated from each other"(25). His text tries to free soul history to be wholly inner, important, and symbolic by deliteralizing psychoanalysis. Hillman shows that, like Freud, Jung also amalgamates psychology with fiction and Jung's psychology presents itself as a continuing essay. Hillman

also takes into consideration the contribution made by Alfred Adler in the field of Psychotherapy and remarks that the most valuable part of Adler's psychotherapy is his understanding of the thoroughly fictional aspect of our minds. Hillman contends that these three great psychologists had each a style of their own when they wrote their findings and their writings have evolved a new genre of fiction that can be located mid way between medical science and humanities. The main question raised by Hillman in this text is "What does the soul want?" In answer he provides a statement which underlines the significance of the question. He says that there cannot be a definitive answer but "We are, however attempting to remain in touch with the soul by means of the question. For Psychotherapy it may be enough to remember- not *what* it wants but *that* it wants, and that the soul's eternal wanting is psychotherapy's eternal question"(129).

In *The Force of Character and the Lasting Life* (1999), Hillman takes up the phenomenon of aging as his subject. He tries to psychologize aging and to discover the soul in it. Looking at aging not as a process but as a structure having its own essential nature, he tries to make sense of the absurd predicaments and ridiculous degradations congruent with age by asking the question, "What is character, and how



does it force us into the patterns we live?” (xv). Hillman brings out a radically special actuality that our last years confirm and fulfill character. He states that character governs physiology and also everything else. Here Hillman perceives old age as a ‘state of being’. For him, ‘old’ is an archetypal phenomenon with its own myths and meanings. This text reveals how the characters of human beings are enriched and made meaningful by old age. The point Hillman makes is that aging is intended by the soul and is necessary for the human condition. The human beings acquire depth of character by lasting into later years. The final years of life have a very important purpose – the fulfillment and confirmation of one’s character.

After this brief review of some of the most important texts by Hillman, it would be pertinent to attempt for delineating some significant concepts from the theory of Archetypal Psychology. Hillman’s choice of the word ‘archetypal’ shows his connection with the Jungian heritage. For Jung, the archetypes governed the psychological forces that influenced human behaviour, thought, and emotion. Jung also located the archetypes in myth and gave a great value to the images associated with it. He introduced various symbols like Shadow, Anima, Self to understand the psychic reality. Though

Hillman takes a radical departure from Jung, he works on the concepts similar to those propounded by Jung. The difference is that, instead of looking for answers in the advancement made by culture and science, Hillman goes back deep into history to find his answers. Some of the important concepts of Archetypal Psychology need to be discussed here in the concluding part of this brief study.

The first and foremost is the concept of the 'soul'. Hillman wants to give importance to the 'soul' rather than something which is called as the 'psyche' by modern psychology. Though the term 'soul' is very ancient and the concept is present in all the religious, cultural, mythical systems of the world, Hillman lends a fresh aspect to this term. The 'soul' is a perspective for Hillman, rather than a substance. Whenever there is an encounter or an experience there is something that can be located in the space between the encounter and the person. Soul making is the process of getting access to this middle space. The word 'soul' refers to that unknown component which turns events into experience; it makes meaning possible. This word has a religious concern. In brief, it can be said that soul is that which has connection with death, love, spirituality; it is the deepening of events into experience, and it is also the imaginative possibility of human nature.

The second important concept for Hillman is that of the 'imaginal'. This concept owes its origin to Henry Corbin whose spiritual standpoint held that imagination plays an important role in human spiritual/inner life. Corbin differentiated between 'imaginal' and 'imaginary'. Imaginary may indicate something fanciful or unreal, but 'imaginal' has a deeper spiritual connotation. Hillman uses 'imaginal' to describe the self/soul that is to be discovered by human beings. For him 'imaginal self' expresses itself in images that are very important for psychology.

Many of Hillman's crucial ideas could not be covered in the present study due to the brief nature of this critical overview. However, one thing is certain that Hillman's ideas cannot be neglected in contemporary psychology. A disciple of Jung, he explored further grounds and gave impetus to a starkly new method of Archetypal psychology that attempts to bridge the gap between therapeutic psychology and humanity. While attempting an archetypal analysis of The Epic of Gilgamesh, Hillman's method along with the established Freudian and Jungian methods prove to be extremely fruitful.

## **Plot of the narrative**

There are many versions of the Epic of Gilgamesh text both in the ancient Akkadian script and also those translated in the modern languages. The most comprehensive and cohesive is the narrative by the ancient author Sin-liqe-Unnani, a Babylonian scholar. For the present research the following English versions have been consulted:

1) *The Epic of Gilgamesh, An Old Babylonian Version* by Morris Jastrow and Albert T. Clay (San Diego: The Book Tree Pub. 1920)

2) *The Epic of Gilgamesh, A Prose Rendition Based upon The Original Akkadian, Babylonian, Hittite and Sumerian Tablets* by John Harris (New York: Wryer's Club Press, 2001)

3) *Gilgamesh* by Alan Wall (Exeter: Shearsman Books Ltd, 2008)

4) *Gilgamesh, A Verse Narrative* by Herbert Mason (Boston: Mariner Books, 1970)

5) *Gilgamesh* by Derek Hines (New York: Anchor Books, 2002)

6) *Gilgamesh, A New English version* by Stephen Mitchell (London : Profile Books Ltd. 2002)

7) *Gilgamesh, A New Rendering in English Verse* by David Ferry ( New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1991)

8) *Gilgamesh, The Sumerian King* by Keith Ishii ( La Vergne,2011)

9) *Gilgamesh, A Novel* by Joan London (New York : Grove Press,2001)

10) *The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* Translated by Andrew George (London: Penguin 1999)

Of all the texts regarding the Gilgamesh epic, the text by Andrew George has been found to be the most comprehensive and lucid. Therefore this text is taken as the main source for delineating the plot of the narrative. The following plot structure emerges from the study of all the above mentioned sources of the Gilgamesh epic.

The first tablet contains a prologue to the epic of the great hero. The speaker here invites the reader to the site where this hero ruled. The speaker says that he shall tell the world about the man who found out all the things, experienced everything and acquired wisdom. This prologue, before introducing us to the hero Gilgamesh, describes his

magnificent achievements. The speaker tells that it was Gilgamesh who built up the wall of Uruk. This wall, shining like a copper band, surrounds the holy shrine of Eanna. This shrine is the House of the Sky, the dwelling of goddess Ishtar ( the goddess of fertility and war). The speaker describes the battlements, the gateway, and the well baked bricks of the great wall. While describing the wall, he refers to the seven Councilors who are believed to have taught the men the seven principal arts of civilization such as architecture, metallurgy, irrigation etc. Then the city of Uruk is described. The inside of this great wall is divided into four parts: the orchards, the clay pits, the temple of Ishtar, and the city of Uruk. A picture of the beauty of the temple Eanna is created through the words of the narrator- the dazzling mosaic walls of many colours, the jeweled lions at the high doorway. Inside there is a copper cabinet that contains the tablets of sky blue lapis lazuli. The speaker says that these tablets contain the story of Gilgamesh. The speaker describes him as the person who was a brave warrior, a good king, a hero to the people of the city, an invincible man, but before decorating him with all these epithets, the speaker simply refers to him as 'Gilgamesh who suffered so much'.

After this, the readers/listeners are told that Gilgamesh was the son of goddess Ninsun ( the goddess of the wild cow, noted for her wisdom), and Lugulbanda. According to the *Encyclopedia Mythica* (<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/l/lugulbanda.html>) he is third on the post-diluvian King-List, and ruler of Uruk for 1200 years, a semi-divine person) was his father. Gilgamesh is described as a bold explorer, who opened passes through the mountains and dug canals in the rough country. He is also described to have traveled to the ends of the Earth and beyond. He is the one who met Utnapishtim, the sole survivor of the great flood. It is told to the audience that Gilgamesh wrote everything down on a tablet of lapis lazuli and locked it in a copper chest after he returned from this great journey.

He is two-thirds divine, and one-third mortal. No one can stand up to him.

Gilgamesh is a very powerful ruler; none can defeat him, but he is not a benevolent king. He snatches sons from mothers for military recruitment and he must copulate with every bride before her marriage to another person. He is described as a ruthless king who kills warriors whenever he feels like fighting, rapes his officers' wives, takes whatever he wants from his people, and destroys anyone who opposes

him. The citizens of Uruk therefore pray to the gods for deliverance from this king. They say that a king is supposed to protect his subjects like a shepherd, not harass them like a wild ox-

It is he who is shepherd of Uruk- the –sheepfold,

[but Gilgamesh] lets no[daughter go free to her] mother,

[*The women voiced*] their[*troubles to the goddesses,*]

[*they brought their*] complaint before[*them:*] (George 3).

The prayer is answered and Aruru, the goddess of creation, is told to make someone strong enough to match Gilgamesh because it was Aruru who made Gilgamesh. Aruru forms another man, named Enkidu from clay. Enkidu, when sent to the earth, lives in the wilds with the animals. He is-

“Coated in hair like the god of the animals,

With the gazelles he grazes on grasses”(George 5).

One day he is noticed by a hunter at a watering hole. The hunter is terrified by the sight of this giant man. He tells his father he has seen a giant man, who is undoubtedly the most powerful in the land. The



hunter is disturbed because Enkidu has unset his traps and filled in his pits. Enkidu lives as one of the animals and protects them. The hunter's father advises him to go to Uruk to Gilgamesh. He should request for Shamhat, the temple harlot, whose charms will attract Enkidu and thus he will be overpowered. The hunter accordingly goes to Gilgamesh and brings back Shamhat to tame Enkidu. They wait for him near a waterhole for three days. Finally Enkidu comes and the hunter tells Shamhat to seduce him by exposing her body. The plan succeeds and Enkidu is attracted to the woman. They are described to have sex for six days and seven nights. Then Enkidu's desire is fulfilled. But he has now become a human being so the animals do not accept him. He has also lost his animal skills so he cannot gallop and catch up with the animals. A change has taken place in his mind and he has acquired reason as well as wide understanding. When he goes back to Shamhat, she tells him to behave like a human and informs him about the pleasures to be had in the city of Uruk. She gives him information about the aspects of human civilized life: music, food and the festivals. She also tells him about the powerful and dreadful king, Gilgamesh. Enkidu, on hearing about Gilgamesh, realizes his own loneliness. He now wants to see Gilgamesh. It is his instinct to find a friend. But first he wants to challenge Gilgamesh. Shamhat describes the strength of

Gilgamesh and says that Enkidu would not be able to defeat such a man. But she also tells him that Gilgamesh has a desire to have a friend. She describes the two dreams that Gilgamesh has just had. In one dream, he saw a meteor landing in a field outside Uruk. Gilgamesh was drawn to this meteor as if it were a woman. He went to it and lifted it with great labour. Then he carried this meteor to his mother, Ninsun. In the other dream, Gilgamesh found an axe lying in the street and a large group of people surrounding it.. Gilgamesh was overcome with admiration and he too loved the axe as if it were his wife. He carried it to his mother and put it at her feet. These dreams were interpreted by Ninsun. She has told him that the rock and the axe represent the man who will be his friend, but before that the man will challenge Gilgamesh:

My son, the axe you saw is a friend,

Like a wife you'll love him, caress and embrace him,

And I, Ninsun, I shall make him your equal.

A mighty comrade will come to you, and be his friend's  
savior,

Mightiest in the land, strength he possesses,

His strength is as mighty as a rock from the sky.

(George11)

The second tablet shows Enkidu and Shamhat leaving the forest. Shamhat has given some part of her garments as clothes to Enkidu. On their way, they stop at a shepherd's camp. Shamhat here makes Enkidu a civilized person. She teaches him how to eat the cooked food, and how to enjoy wine. The shepherds marvel at this giant of a man. Shamhat tells them that he is indeed a mighty person. Enkidu now guards the sheep against the wolves and lions of the forest. A passing stranger tells him about the practice set by Gilgamesh regarding the wedding. This person is carrying presents for the wedding ceremony. He informs that Gilgamesh always enjoys the bride on the first night at any wedding ceremony. Enkidu is angered by this. He decides to stop this practice by challenging Gilgamesh. As he goes to Uruk and makes his intention apparent, the people cheer him. They are amazed to see so strong a man. Enkidu stands on the threshold of the bridal chamber and stops Gilgamesh. He fights with Gilgamesh. The walls of the city tremble due to this terrible fight. Finally, Gilgamesh defeats Enkidu, but as the fight ends they become friends. Enkidu admits that

Gilgamesh is the rightful king of Uruk and pledges his fidelity. Gilgamesh declares his undying friendship to Enkidu. They embrace and kiss each other. He takes him to his mother. Ninsun, gives their friendship her blessing. She declares that Enkidu is to be her son's faithful cohort from that time onwards. Gilgamesh expresses his desire to undertake a bold adventure. He wants to kill Humbaba who lives in the distant cedar forest as its guard. Humbaba is a fearsome monster appointed by the god of Earth-Enlil, to protect this forest. Entry into this forest is forbidden. Enkidu and the elders are apprehensive and try to warn Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh has made up his mind to fight a mighty enemy. He wants to establish himself as a worthy hero. Finally his decision prevails.

The third tablet describes preparations for the adventure of these two heroes. When Gilgamesh goes to his mother for her blessings, she is saddened because she knows how dangerous this expedition can be. She prepares herself properly for the prayer and asks the Sun God Shamash, "Why did you afflict my son Gilgamesh with so restless a spirit?"(George 24). She prays for his safety and asks Shamash to aid Gilgamesh. She comes back from her prayer and proclaims Enkidu as her second son. Ninsun and the elders give them

advice for their journey. They tell Gilgamesh to use Enkidu's skills and knowledge of the life in wilderness. This tablet depicts all the invocations, sacrifices and speeches made for the safety and victory of Gilgamesh, and practical preparations, and after listening to more warnings from the elders and declaring their intention to prevail, the two heavily armed heroes step outside the seven-bolt gate of Uruk and set off on their adventure. They do not stop to eat until they have walked twenty leagues. In three days, they cover 150 leagues (450 miles); it would take an ordinary man three weeks to walk so far. They dig a well and make an offering to the god Shamash, then continue on their journey. As they walk, they bolster each other's spirits. Enkidu urges Gilgamesh on whenever his courage flags, assuring him that they can defeat Humbaba. When Enkidu falters, Gilgamesh reassures him that he is a good warrior, that when the time for battle comes he will not lose heart, and that they will stand and fight together. When they finally reach the forest, they pause for a moment and think about what they are going to do.

The journey to the Cedar Forest is described in the fourth tablet. Gilgamesh and Enkidu traveled full day before they ate. The distance they covered is described as [at twenty] leagues they broke bread, [at]

thirty leagues they pitched camp: [Fifty] leagues they travelled in the course of a day, by the third day [a march] of a month and a half; nearer they draw to Mount Lebanon, (George 30). In the course of their journey, they pitch a camp every three days and conduct a ritual for calling a dream. In the first dream Gilgamesh sees that they are at a foot of a mountain, in a ravine. He looked up and the mountain fell over on them. They were helpless like the flies. He is upset because of this dream but Enkidu said that the dream was good and it has conveyed the meaning that they will seize Humbaba, kill him, and leave his corpse to waste on the ground. In the second dream Gilgamesh saw that again a mountain fell upon them as they passed beneath it. The rocks of the mountain tangled his feet so he could not move. Then an intolerable blazing light came. Inside this light there was a person who was inexpressibly beautiful. This person pulled Gilgamesh out, gave him water and comforted him. Enkidu again said that this dream indicates their victory over Humbaba who is like a mountain. In the third dream Gilgamesh saw that the heavens roared and the earth roared up to the heavens; the daylight failed and there was darkness all around. There was lightning and fire blazed out of the forest. Clouds gathered and Gilgamesh and Enkidu were showered by a rain of ashes and coals. This time also Enkidu tells that the dream is a good omen. In the fourth

dream Gilgamesh saw a thunderbird in the sky. This thunderbird rose like a cloud, soaring above them. Its mouth was fire and its breath was death. There was also a strange looking man who bound the wings of the thunderbird and cast it down before Gilgamesh. Enkidu interpreted that the man was Shamash who bound the wings of mighty thunderbird-like Humbaba. In the fifth dream Gilgamesh saw that he had taken hold of a bull from the wild. As the bull bellowed, clouds of dust arose from the ground. Then there was another man who helped Gilgamesh and gave him water from his water skin. Enkidu told him that the wild bull was Shamash and the man who helped him was Gilgamesh's father Lugalbanda. Gilgamesh is conveyed that he has the blessings of both: his god and his father. But later on Enkidu is overcome by fear. This time it is Gilgamesh who gives him courage saying, "Take my hand, friend, and we shall go [on] together, [let] your thoughts dwell on combat Forget death and [seek] life!" (George 38)

The fifth tablet describes the combat of Gilgamesh and Enkidu with the mighty Humbaba. It begins with the scene of the two heroes at the periphery of the cedar forest. They admire the beauty of the forest: the height of the trees and their sweet incense. Very soon they confront Humbaba. He speaks with malice to both Gilgamesh and

Enkidu. He insults Enkidu. Enkidu urges for a swift action from Gilgamesh. When Gilgamesh starts to fight Humbaba, it is difficult for him to carry on the fight. But the sun god Shamash helps him by raising all the thirteen winds. This weakens Humbaba. And very soon he is at the mercy of Gilgamesh. He pleads to Gilgamesh for sparing his life and Gilgamesh considers that this might be done. But Enkidu insists that Humbaba should not be left alive. Enkidu tells him to kill Humbaba before the gods find out what they are doing. Finally Gilgamesh kills Humbaba. They fell the trees of the forest. Gilgamesh selects one big cedar tree and cuts it for making a great door for the temple of Enlil, the Earth god and Humbaba's master.

In the sixth tablet Gilgamesh is shown to be back in Uruk. He was now a great Hero with all the splendor. The focus of this tablet is on Ishtar's attraction for Gilgamesh. The goddess Ishtar is tempted by the strength and splendor of Gilgamesh. She proposed to Gilgamesh. But Gilgamesh wisely refused to marry her. He knew that none of Ishtar's lovers lasted long. He recounted to her what happened to all her lovers. She had made all her lovers suffer. He told her that he did not want the same fate. This enraged Ishtar greatly. She went to her father, the sky god. Anu and asked for the bull of heaven to punish Gilgamesh.



Anu was reluctant at first, but then he relented. So now the mighty bull of heaven was sent to Uruk to punish Gilgamesh. The bull created havoc in Uruk. It killed many citizens. Enkidu and Gilgamesh fought bravely. Together they overpowered the bull. They found out the weak spot of the bull and killed him. Enkidu insulted Ishtar by throwing the flesh of the bull at her. Gilgamesh called the craftsmen and decorated the horns of the dead bull. He dedicated them to his father Lugalbanda.

The happiness of these two friends was short lived. As the seventh tablet describes, Enkidu had a dream that night. He saw the gods Anu, Enlil, Ea and Shamash in assembly. Anu said that Gilgamesh and Enkidu have killed Humbaba and Bull of Heaven. Therefore, one of them must die. Enlil suggested the death of Enkidu. Shamash opposed it but finally the decision of Enkidu's death prevailed. Enkidu was saddened due to the knowledge of his imminent death conveyed by this dream. He became delirious and started having visions. He saw the vision of the great cedar door that he made for the temple of Enlil. This has failed to secure gods favour for him so cursed this door. His thoughts then turned to the hunter and Shamhat, the two people because of whom he had become civilized. Overcome by grief, Enkidu cursed them. The sun god Shamash reasoned with him and

Enkidu took back his curse from Shamhat. He then blessed Shamhat. Enkidu had another dream in which he saw the Angel of death dragging him to the world of the Dead. He described this dream to Gilgamesh. Enkidu was greatly disturbed due to the sight of the Netherworld. In his illness he cursed his fate. He did not want such a death. He would prefer to die fighting but not in illness. He said to Gilgamesh, “My friend, one who [combat, and shall make not my name.]” (George 62). Enkidu finally died due to the illness sent by gods.

The eighth tablet describes the funeral of Enkidu and the immense grief of Gilgamesh. Enkidu was more than a friend and a partner for Gilgamesh. He lamented with great sorrow for losing what was almost a part of his life. Gilgamesh performed the funeral of Enkidu by spending a lot of wealth. He called his craftsmen and made Enkidu’s funerary statue. He selected precious items from his treasury to be kept in Enkidu’s grave. It was necessary because all these items would be carried by Enkidu to the Netherworld. These items would win Enkidu the goodwill of the deities in the Netherworld. Gilgamesh showed all these items to the public. He gave a grand banquet to the people. As a part of the rites Gilgamesh anointed Enkidu’s statue with

affection. He decorated it and showed it to Shamash. After finishing the rites he left the city of Uruk.

Enkidu's death brought the awareness about his own mortality to Gilgamesh – “I shall die, and shall I not then be as Enkidu?” (George 70). The ninth tablet, while revealing the fear of death in Gilgamesh's heart, describes his wanderings. Now Gilgamesh wanted to escape death so he set out in search of the only immortal person : Uta – napolishti. He had now removed his attire of the king. He wore the animal skins and wandered in the open country as if he had no family. He travelled to the end of the world and arrived to the mountains where the sun sets and rises. The scorpion – man guarded the way under these mountains. Gilgamesh asked his help. The scorpion man was unable to convince him that it was dangerous to pass that way. He finally allowed him to pass the way under the mountains. Gilgamesh had to complete his journey on this path of the sun before the sun could catch up with him. He did this successfully and arrived at the place of light where sun was in front of him. There was brightness everywhere and the spiky bushes there blossomed with gemstones.

The tenth tablet describes how Gilgamesh went to his destination. He first went to the tavern by the sea – shore beyond the

bright garden. Siduri, a wise old goddess, was the tavern keeper. When she saw Gilgamesh from a distance, she thought that he was some hunter and so, closed the door of the tavern. Gilgamesh asked her to open the door otherwise he would break it. He revealed his identity and recounted his story to Siduri. He asked Siduri to help him reach Utanapishti. Initially, Siduri tried to convince him about the futility of his quest and the dangerous passage he was to cross. She told him that he could not have a life that does not have death because when the gods created human beings, they gave the humans death and kept the immortal life for themselves. Finally Siduri told him how to find Utanapishti and he rushed out on his way. He went to the place where there was Urshanabi, the ferryman of Utanapishti. Gilgamesh was required to cross the waters of Death to reach Utanapishti. He, initially fought with Urshanabi and the strange creatures that were there with the ferryman. After the fighting was over, he explained to Urshanabi his reason for coming so far. He asked for Urshanabi's help in reaching Utanapishti. While fighting Urshanabi, Gilgamesh had smashed the strange creatures 'stone things'. Urshanabi told him that these were required to keep him safe while taking a passage over the waters of Death. However, Gilgamesh could still undertake the journey if he would cut the poles for punting. He needed three hundred punting poles

of great length. Gilgamesh took his axe and cut the poles from the forest. He used these poles to propel the boat forward. When all the poles were used and gone, he made use of the ferryman's clothes to make a sail from them. Finally Gilgamesh and Urshanbi completed their journey and arrived at Utanpishti's place. Here Gilgamesh had to recount his story once again for explaining the purpose of his journey to Utanapishti. Utanpishti told him that death was inevitable for all human beings because it had been decided so by the Anunnaki, the great gods and Mammitum, the maker of destiny.

The eleventh tablet describes the story of Utanapishti's immortality as told to Gilgamesh. Long time ago the gods including Anu (the father of all gods), Ellil (warrior and counselor), and Ea god of fresh water met in a conference and decided to cause a great flood in order to destroy all the living beings on earth. Ea was beneficent to the living creatures so he conveyed this information to Utanapishtim and instructed him to build a boat. Utnapishtim was told to put on board the seed of all living things. Therefore when the flood came, Utnapishtim and other living creatures with him were saved. When the gods discovered this, they were furious, but Ea reasoned with them and their anger was subsided. Then the god Ellil went over to the boat and

blessed Utnapishtim and his wife with immortality. Utnapishtim told Gilgamesh that he was not capable of bringing the gods together for bestowing immortality on Gilgamesh but there was a possibility of his becoming immortal if he too, like Utnapishtim, did not sleep for six days and seven nights. Gilgamesh decided to do so but very soon he passed into slumber. Utnapishtim told his wife to bake Gilgamesh daily portion of bread and put it by his head as he slept. He also told her to mark along the wall the number of days that he had slept. Utnapishtim then woke Gilgamesh on the seventh day and proved that he had failed the test. The Ferryman Utnapishtim was also punished for bringing Gilgamesh across the waters of Death. He was banned entry to Utnapishtim's place. While Gilgamesh prepared to depart, Utnapishtim's wife spoke to her husband and asked him to show some mercy; so he told Gilgamesh a secret of a plant by using which he could always be rejuvenated. As the plant grew in deep waters, Gilgamesh tied heavy stones to his feet and went under water. He procured the plant and left for his city Uruk along with Urshanbi on their way back, they come across a pool of water where the already tired Gilgamesh took bath in it. A snake was attracted by the fragrance of the plant and it took the plant away as Gilgamesh's attention was diverted. Soon the snake shed its skin and is rejuvenated. Now

Gilgamesh realized that he had lost everything. He would not be able to pluck out another plant because he did not remember the exact spot where he dived. Finally, they arrived at the city of Uruk and Gilgamesh showed Urashanabi the grand walls that he had built around the city. In a circular manner the epic ends with the description that was given in the beginning “A square mile is city, a square mile date-grove, a square mile is clay-pit, half a square mile the temple of Ishtar: there square miles end a half is Uruk’s expanse” (George 99)”

## **Analysis of the Text**

The Gilgamesh text is considered as an epic and as a myth for the purpose of the present analysis. It is to be called as an epic because it recounts the story of a cultural hero much in the same manner as the ancient Greek epics like *The Odyssey* and *Iliad*, the Indian epic of *Ramayana*, or the medieval epic *Beowulf*. Though this epic was not meant to be recited with the accompaniment of music, there are evidences showing that it was to be read aloud on some occasions. The central figure is a powerful king, a heroic warrior who undertakes journeys for certain purposes. The journeys start and end in the same place, the city of Uruk. The cyclical nature of the narrative is clearly visible as the description in the opening lines and the concluding lines is the same. The text is also to be regarded as myth because it has the participation by supernatural beings and it deals with one of the most fundamental issues of human existence. Though Gilgamesh was actually a king in the Sumerian history, the deeds and events described in the poem have passed into the realm of the mythic. Here Gilgamesh is only partly human. He is more of a superhuman figure. All the same, his pleasures and pains are essentially human. Myths are the stories that have both the elements, human and superhuman. Myths discuss a



certain essential reality of human existence. Such a reality, the reality of death, is discussed here. Hence the epic of Gilgamesh is treated in the same manner as a myth.

It is to be noted that when the Epic of Gilgamesh begins the speaker makes it clear that the hero Gilgamesh himself has written it down. Therefore, in a way, it has an autobiographical character. Although Gilgamesh is two-thirds divine and only one-third human, the story reveals the thematic concerns that are very human. There are three main thematic concerns depicted in this epic. These are 1) Immortality and Death 2) Companionship 3) Transformation from a state of ignorance to knowledge.

The aim of the present study is to carry out an archetypal analysis of the Epic of Gilgamesh. These three thematic aspects are the main concerns of the Gilgamesh text and therefore the archetypal analysis has been carried out along these lines mainly. While doing so, other symbols have also been considered. Before making any symbolic interpretation, we should not forget the fact that the deities and sacred rituals mentioned in the Epic had an objective reality for the Sumerians. They lived in a world where these deities existed. In the study of any myth this aspect cannot be sidelined. However, the incidents, action

and symbols of the Epic of Gilgamesh, whether taken literally or symbolically, lead us to a deeper meaning that is essentially embedded in the human condition.

The Epic of Gilgamesh is mainly treated as a myth here. It is not considered as a historical document. Although Gilgamesh was a real king of the Sumerians and he actually ruled the city of Uruk, he is a deity in the Epic. A myth basically tells a story about supernatural beings. Gilgamesh is a supernatural entity and therefore his story qualifies for the status of a myth. Like all other myths the action of this Epic is full of the intervention from the gods. Shamash the sun god, Enlil, Ea, Ishtar and other Sumerian gods perform significant action in the Epic. Gilgamesh himself is partly divine, his mother is goddess Ninsun who plays an important role especially in the earlier part of the epic. Later parts of the epic do not have the presence of Ninsun. Though it is told that the king Lugulbanda, (who like Gilgamesh was an actual historical figure and a king of Uruk) is Gilgamesh's father, it is not clear whether he had any direct role in Gilgamesh's birth. That is to say, we cannot be sure about the biological relation between Gilgamesh and Lugulbanda. Like Gilgamesh, Lugulbanda also was

given the status of deity by the Sumerians and he also was worshipped as all other kings were.

Along with the divine or supernatural aspect of the story, the human aspect happens to be equally important. As the present discussion is to centre on the archetypal analysis of the Gilgamesh myth, the first question that comes to mind is about the 'partly' divine nature of the hero. This is not a story about the gods, it is a story of the deeds of the man called Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh is only partly divine. He may have been described as 'two thirds' divine, that is, more divine than human, but all along we find him at the mercy of the gods (and the Sumerian gods here represent the forces of fate). The gods do not treat him as one of their own. Gilgamesh himself does not consider his person to be a god. He cannot do so, because he is a mortal human being. Therefore, the two-thirds part which comes as a divine part may only stand as an explanation for his superhuman strength and nothing more.

The superhuman strength of Gilgamesh does not propel him towards good deeds. On the contrary we see a ruthless despot in him who subjugates and tortures his subjects. The superhuman strength of Gilgamesh requires an equally strong entity to counter it and lead it to

the correct course of action. This role is performed by Enkidu. As described in the earlier chapter of this study, James Hillman's method of 'Archetypal Psychoanalysis' has established the significance of a 'daimon' in everyone's life. Here we can say that Enkidu is a personification of that daimon. The daimon is the guardian spirit that always lead a human being to its fate. The figure of Enkidu is the factor which brings about change in the action of this epic, and transformation in the personality of its central character. Enkidu can be looked at from several points of view. He is the brute, the animal who grazes on the grasslands and cannot speak. He is hairy, like all other animals. The animals regard him as one of their own. He protects the animals from the hunters. Later on, he is humanized/civilized, but nevertheless, Enkidu can be seen as the human being in its most primary form. He represents that part of the personality which is not refined. The human being may become civilized but his/her animal instincts always remain in the personality.

If we follow the Freudian model, then Enkidu is the representation of id in the earlier part of the epic. Later on, he performs the role of the 'super-ego' because it is only after meeting Enkidu that Gilgamesh longs for heroic glory and undertakes the adventure in the

cedar forest. He becomes a benevolent king after confrontation with Enkidu. Therefore, in Freudian terms, the uncoordinated instinctual trends of Gilgamesh are controlled and a moralizing process takes place due to Enkidu. The sexual and aggressive drives in the personality of Gilgamesh are subdued. They are replaced by camaraderie for Enkidu, benevolent consideration for his subjects and an ambition to achieve heroic glory.

From a Jungian perspective, Enkidu may be said to represent the 'Shadow' aspect of Gilgamesh's personality. The shadow is the least desirable aspect of one's personality. In the Jungian model, the shadow is a part of the unconscious. It is instinctive and irrational but also a seat of creativity. In the Jungian process of 'individuation', one is required to confront his/her 'shadow' in order to come to a realization of one's true self. Gilgamesh's confrontation with Enkidu can be looked at as his encounter with his shadow. Though Enkidu is civilized at the time of clash with Gilgamesh, his transformation is followed by Gilgamesh's transformation and certainly Enkidu can be seen as a symbol of the instinctive.

It can be seen that Gilgamesh's superhuman strength the divine aspect, and his instinctual drives – the human aspect are in constant

contention. Until these two aspects achieve balance, Gilgamesh's true character cannot emerge. Enkidu becomes an instrument for bringing about a balanced state here. Hence, the divine and the human in Gilgamesh can be seen as harmonized after his contact with Enkidu. The domestication of Enkidu is required for this process. If Enkidu is to become an instrument for civilizing Gilgamesh, he must first become civilized himself. Therefore, the epic shows civilization of Enkidu prior to the civilization of Gilgamesh, the temple harlot performs a catalytic role. Here Shamhat can be seen as the mother archetype because like a mother, she teaches Enkidu the most basic things about civilized life. The camp of the shepherds here serves as a significant step towards the acculturation because it is at this camp that Enkidu becomes a civilized human being. He acquires notions about morality and hence is angered by teaching about the immoral acts of Gilgamesh.

The conflict of Gilgamesh with Humbaba is a representation of opposition between good and evil, darkness and light. Shamash, the sun god, is worshipped by Gilgamesh. The giant creature Humbaba is referred to as 'evil' in this epic. It represents the forces of darkness. In the fight with Humbaba, Shamash helps Gilgamesh. Here the god of light is helping the hero to destroy the darkness. The darkness must be

wiped out completely. Hence, when Gilgamesh is thinking of showing mercy to Humbaba, Enkidu urges him to kill this giant quickly. Enkidu is like a voice in the consciousness of Gilgamesh here. He helps the hero to take a final decision. The archetypal conflict between good and evil is thus depicted in the episode of fight with Humbaba. Humbaba does not die with honour. He pleads for mercy, he says that he would serve Gilgamesh if his life is spared. He is ready to betray his master Entil. Entil has appointed him to guard the cedar trees of the forest. But Humbaba is ready to permit Gilgamesh to cut the cedars when his life is at stake. The adventure in the cedar forest is more than just another heroic show of strength. It can be seen as a journey of initiation. Gilgamesh has bid his mother adiun to find glory. Similarly, Enkidu can also be regarded as Ninsun's son because she herself has conferred this status to him. Here Gilgamesh and Enkidu can be treated as one entity. Whenever Gilgamesh feels weak, Enkidu gives him courage and whenever Enkidu is afraid, Gilgamesh consoles him with words that bring back strength. It is like two voices in the mind of one person. From the beginning, when they are entering the forest, to the end, when Gilgamesh slays Humbaba, these two voices are heard. They are represented by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, but, as mentioned earlier, Enkidu can be seen as a part of Gilgamesh here. Enkidu has become very much

like Gilgamesh when they embark on this expedition. He is almost as strong as Gilgamesh and moreover, he is adopted by Ninsun as her own son. So, Enkidu is nothing but another part of Gilgamesh. Seen from yet another perspective, this journey can be regarded as a person's inward journey to explore the boundaries that make his/her consciousness, inner world because Gilgamesh and Enkidu are undertaking this journey in defiance of one god Enlil to cut the trees that are sacred. They are entering an area forbidden to the human beings. A spiritual journey is always a journey into the unknown territory. It takes courage to make such a journey because it may mean breaking of certain norms and conventions. Gilgamesh and Enkidu are doing a similar thing. They wish to break the norms and conventions. They enter a strange territory to cut the wood regarded as sacred. They wish to make new idols and door to the temple from this wood. They are making their own spiritual reality. They are also expanding the horizons of their consciousness. In this way, the journey is worldly as well as an exploration of the spiritual world. By destroying the darkness that lies deep in one's self, the persons/heroes are trying to illuminate their self. The episode in the cedar forest underlines one of the important themes of this epic: companionship/friendship. The significance of collective action is brought out here. Gilgamesh is not



alone in this adventure. He has the companionship of Enkidu. Together they are like a community. Therefore Gilgamesh can draw solace from Enkidu by sharing his dreams. If the dreams are looked at from the purely scientific or rational point of view, then it is evident that Gilgamesh's dreams are reflections of his fear. (the other aspects or interpretations of dreams are dealt with separately in this study). He is surely afraid of defeat and death because his adversary is not a common person. He is the mighty Humbaba. Therefore it is natural for him to have fears regarding defeat from these fears. Likewise, when Enkidu faces fear, Gilgamesh is shown to be providing solace. Now Enkidu and Gilgamesh are carrying out something not for any personal gain from the purely materialistic viewpoint. Gilgamesh wants his name to last long after his death. He is thinking about the glory of heroism. He certainly wants people to remember him as a hero. As Enkidu is his companion, he also has a share in the glory. Together they embark on an adventure and win in the conflict. It is important not to overlook the fact that Gilgamesh is performing a sort of mission which is collective and not individual. Thus the relevance of companionship is revealed from this adventure. There will be further actions, as the epic proceeds, which will be performed along with Enkidu.

Gilgamesh fights the bull of heaven with help from Enkidu. The bull of heaven is sent by Ishtar whose offer of love is rejected by Gilgamesh. The wisdom of Gilgamesh is evident here. When he returns as a hero to Uruk, his glory attracts Ishtar, the goddess of love. She is the goddess whose temple is central to the city of Uruk. When she expresses her wish to take Gilgamesh as her lover, she least expects a refusal. But Gilgamesh reminds her of what has happened to all her mortal lovers. Gilgamesh here shows his control over his emotions. Though Ishtar is a goddess and though it is his duty to obey her, he cannot forget that all of Ishtar's lovers have suffered immensely. They have been changed into animals by Ishtar. Gilgamesh does not want the same thing to happen to him. Another fact of Gilgamesh's personality is reasserted here. He has already transgressed the set pattern by killing Humbaba. Now he breaks another pattern. He does not get caught up in the web of the fatal goddess. Ishtar can be seen as an example of the 'femme fatale' archetype. This is a common archetype spread across the mythologies of almost all civilizations. The femme fatale uses her charms and beauty to achieve her purpose. The purpose may be the destruction of a demon, as exhibited in the Hindu myth of Mohini where Vishnu appears as a beautiful woman to destroy the demon Bhasmasura. The example of Sphinx from the Greek mythology is

another variant where those who cannot solve the riddle are killed and eaten by the ravenous monster. There are numerous other femme fatale figures like Scylla, Aphrodite, Medea, Jezebel in the mythologies of different cultures. Usually it is the wicked, seductive enchantress to whose charms the men fall prey. Ishtar's past lovers have been destroyed but Gilgamesh not only resists the advances but also repels her by his taunting. This angers Ishtar greatly and she has to send the powerful bull of heaven to avenge for the insult inflicted by Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh's action of refusal to Ishtar can be seen as a decision of a hero who knows the consequences of his actions.

The Gilgamesh Ishtar confrontation also reveals a facet of the theme of transformation. Gilgamesh is described to deflower each and every newly wed girl in Uruk. In the early part of this epic Gilgamesh appears as a man whose lust for women knows no bounds. But when the goddess of love and fertility herself offers her love to him, it is not expected that such a lustful person would refuse her. However, Gilgamesh is transformed after the arrival of Enkidu and the epic shows that his way of thinking has changed. He has gained wisdom because he can foresee what happens to a person who accepts Ishtar's love. As a person belonging to the Sumerian community he must be fully aware

of the wrath of gods but he willingly takes the risk. Moreover, after killing the bull of heaven, he is with Enkidu who further insults Ishtar by throwing the flesh of the bull in her face.

After slaughtering the bull of heaven Gilgamesh and Enkidu offer the innards not to Ishtar but to the god Shamash. They are described to be prostrating before him and praying him. The theme of companionship converges with the other themes in the epic. All the acts performed in these episodes, the insult of Ishtar, the prayer to Shamash are the collective actions of Enkidu and Gilgamesh. Though Gilgamesh is the central character of the epic, his acts are all shared by Enkidu. They are together in times of danger, as in the fight with Humbaba and the fight with the bull of heaven, and they are also together in victory. They celebrate the triumph over Humbaba and the slaughter of the bull of heaven together.

After half of the epic is over, it touches the most important theme death and immortality. As Gilgamesh and Enkidu have offended the gods, they are to be punished. Quite arbitrarily, it is decided by the gods that Enkidu must die. In the incident of the death of Enkidu, Gilgamesh first realizes the horror of death. In the Sumerian world, there was no promise of resurrection or even peace and happiness after

death. There are no concepts of Heaven and Hell in the Sumerian mythology. Death was the inescapable destiny and the prospect of afterlife, as gathered from other Sumerian myths, is a very sordid one. It was believed that the human beings travel to the netherworld after death. Ereshkigal is the queen of the underworld and the god Nergal is her consort. From a myth concerning these gods and a myth regarding Ishtar where she travels to the underworld to revive one of her lovers, the picture of the netherworld can be constructed. Belitseri, goddess of the desert is the scribe of the netherworld. This place was believed to be in the west. The western direction also indicates the direction of the desert for the Sumerians. The goddess Ereshkigal is figured as a monster having head of a lion, snakes in her hand and animals sucking her breast. When a person's spirit went to the underworld, the scribe or the guardian is to give the name of the person to Ereshkigal. Then the goddess of the underworld decided whether to curse the person or not. The access to the underworld was through graves. The universe was conceptualized as a sphere. One half of this sphere was occupied by the living and the other half was occupied by the dead. The Sumerian gods and goddesses had rule over these two parts of the sphere. As mentioned earlier Ereshkigal and Nergal were the goddess and the god of the underworld. The two worlds were linked by the gates that were

guarded by other gods. The dead are not pictured to be in any good condition in the Sumerian mythology. The dead were said to be eating dust and were always thirsty. The living relatives of the dead thought it as their duty to provide food etc. to the dead. Death was the destiny of all the people and it did not matter whether one was good while living or if one performed evil deeds. All the people were destined to go to the netherworld from which there was no hope of salvation. The idea of divine compassion or judgment after death is absent in the Sumerian mythology. All these elements make death a very grim and detectable reality.

Enkidu is conveyed the verdict about his death through his dream. The gods Anu, Enlil, Ea and Shamash are in assembly. Gilgamesh and Enkidu are to be punished for killing Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven. Enlil says that Enkidu could die but Gilgamesh is to live. In a way, Enkidu is being sacrificed for the acts performed by both of them. Enkidu is unable to understand the logic behind this decision. He is confused, afraid and also enraged. In his enragement he curses all those who made him civilized, not understanding that his existence was conceived for the sake of Gilgamesh. In the other dream he sees a dark faced bird-man leading him to the underworld. This bird man may be a

demon of the underworld. Enkidu sees the scribe of the underworld Belitseri, receiving him. He tells Gilgamesh that he saw the kings (“crowned heads”) and common people in the same state of being. He also describes seeing the priests and gods. The underworld is called as the ‘House of Dust’ here. The reference to ‘crowned heads ’ is significant here. It signifies that one may be a king or a common person, the same fate awaits them all. The netherworld is called as ‘the Houses of Dust’ signifying the value of the dead people. Enkidu then falls ill and dies. Gilgamesh grieves deeply for his friend. He has lost the most valuable companion. He takes care to give him all the honours after death and carries out the rituals in a grand manner. The most important message of the text is conveyed here to Gilgamesh : death is inevitable and it is a detestable state of being.

The grief of Gilgamesh on losing Enkidu is very great. It takes him to the point of madness. Here one can detect the mixture of two feelings grife and fear for death. Before Enkidu’s death, the two have been engaged in killing but the realization of the horror of death did not come to any of the two. Now when Gilgamesh watches Enkidu disappearing from the world of the living he feels both sad and helpless. The Sumerian view of death and afterlife has already been

described earlier in the foregoing discussion. They did not have any hope in the state of being after death. Gilgamesh comes to a realization that he may be the mightiest of all but it is going to end in death. His life and the life of all others have a common destiny – death. And death is horrific. Gilgamesh cannot rejoice in the fact that he has been spared from punishment from the gods. He is a different person now. He discards his royal garments, wears animal skins and departs in search of the immortal being. This is yet another transformation in the personality of Gilgamesh. First, he became a benevolent ruler from a despotic one. As a human being, he became conscious of his duties towards other human beings. His lust and arrogance were transformed into quest for glory. In a way, he started thing beyond the time of his existence because his adventure in the cedar forest was undertaken for heroic glory. He wanted his name to last after his death. He also exhibited wisdom and courage in refusing the offer of Ishtar. Now he has come to a stage in his life where a stark reality has dawned on him. He is able to see futility of all existence. He has mixed emotions. There is the grief of losing the companion, there is the horror of impending death, however far away in time it may be. One can also see a sort of reversal of roles here. In the earlier part of the epic Enkidu was brought into the civilized world. When he had anointed his body liked civilized



people and when he had put on the clothes of the civilized people, they had noticed that he appeared to be like the mighty king Gilgamesh now, when Enkidu is gone, Gilgamesh seems to be adopting the role of a person who is living in times prior to the civilization. The discarding of royal clothes and use of the animal skins for covering his body is an act that makes him resemble Enkidu. Earlier Enkidu was transformed into a person like Enkidu. But there is a great difference in the two personalities. The person Enkidu before entry into the civilized world was almost like an animal, the person Gilgamesh who chooses to wear animal skin is far from being so. He is a human being tormented to the extreme by a realization. In this way the reversal is only physical. Enkidu, in his earlier phase, represented the wild human being and Gilgamesh, in this later phase represents a totally different human being with a deeper realization.

One thing that is to be noted in the episode regarding Enkidu's death is to examine how Enkidu is brought to accept his death. The Sun god Shamash plays an important role here. While cursing all who made him a civilized person, Enkidu also curses Shamash the temple priestess of Shamash who copulated with him and brought him to the city of Uruk. The sun god reasons with him and tells him that Shamash

has made it possible for him to enjoy the pleasures of a civilized person. He makes Enkidu take back his curse and Enkidu actually gives blessings to her after this. Shamsh offers comfort to Enkidu and tells him that living the life of a civilized person is better than living like animals. Love, glory and other refinements of a cultured existence are important. A person should be loved when she/he lived and should be mourned after death. Enkidu is thus provided with solace. He finally accepts death as his destiny. But the same cannot be done for Gilgamesh. The sun god does not appear and reason with Gilgamesh. This indicates that it is the destiny of Gilgamesh to explore the reality of life and finality of death for himself. He is to take the journey himself. He must himself discover the answer to his questions. The epic brings him to a point in his life when he has to forsake all the power and glory and set out to search for the immortal life. This becomes the mission of his life. He cannot rest until he has achieved his goal, however difficult it might be. While embarking on this journey, Gilgamesh is reticent. Like the previous episode when he had set out to destroy Humbaba, he does not declare his intentions to his subjects. He does not boast of what he is going after. This shows a significant change in his mental state.

When Gilgamesh sets out on his final adventure, he is a person with humility. He is also confused and uncomfortable. But nevertheless, he is brave and determined. The dream at the foot of the mountain Mashu, describes his state of mind. Prior to the dream he has been visited by the Sun god Shamash has told him that he can never find an unending life but Gilgamesh has not been convinced. Now what he needs is a guiding vision from the gods. But the Sumerian belief is that the gods have kept immortality for themselves. So it is not surprising that Gilgamesh does not get any help from any of the gods. In his dreams he is surrounded by lions. He fights the lions with his axe and sword. He defeats these lions. The dream shows Gilgamesh's state of mind and it also indicates his impending struggle with the powers of the netherworld or underworld. Nergal, the god of the underworld is represented in iconography as a lion. Ereshkigal, the goddess queen of the underworld is pictured as a being with lion's head. Therefore, the struggle with the lions can be an indication of Gilgamesh's contest with these deities. By seeking the secret of immortality, Gilgamesh is again defying the order set by the gods. He may be confused because he is travelling on a new path and does not know what confronts him, but he has the courage to defeat anyone or anything that comes in his way.

The actions or plot of the epic after the tablet describing Enkidu's death clearly follow the 'quest of the hero' archetype. Earlier in the epic the hero Gilgamesh has undertaken a journey in search of glory. But that is to be viewed as a sort of collective action. Now, the hero is alone and entering in an unknown territory. So the features of the quest archetype are most prominently asserted in the later part of the epic of Gilgamesh. The archetype of the hero's journey has been most famously dealt with by Joseph Campbell. Campbell has identified different stages in the journey of the hero. The quest pattern is very popular in the stories of all times. Myths, being the most ancient stories, have used the quest archetype over and over again. In the epic of Gilgamesh the quest serves both as a plot device and as a symbol. As this epic is regarded to be the most ancient of all, it can be said that it is the most earliest example of the quest motif. It predates the other prominent quest stories of Odysseus, Jason, and Psyche. Odysseus was cursed by the gods to wander and suffer for a long time. Then, through the intervention of the goddess Athena, the Olympian gods allowed him to return to his kingdom. Jason undertook the journey to recover the golden fleece. Psyche had lost her lover Cupid and she travelled to different worlds in his search. There are numerous such stories of quest that can be found in almost all the cultures of the world. What

differentiates the quest of Gilgamesh is the purpose of his quest. The basis pattern of the quest myth is that the protagonist / hero is in search of some object or some knowledge. In the course of the journey, the hero has to face and overcome various challenges and adversaries. The journeys described in diverse mythologies adhere to this pattern. After successful completion of the journey, and after acquiring the object or the knowledge for which the journey was undertaken, the protagonist achieves the status of a mythical hero / culture hero. In case of Gilgamesh, he has already undertaken such a journey and has achieved this status. This journey for finding the secret of immortality is his second and most significant quest. As stated earlier, the purpose of the quest is the hallmark of Gilgamesh's quest. The other mythical heroes have been described to undertake journeys for different purposes, but none of these has been for immortality. One parallel can be detected in the Maori mythology where the culture hero Mani tries to win immortality for the human race. Like Gilgamesh, Mani has also successfully completed the tasks that have earned him the status of a hero, before undertaking this quest. The most important of these tasks have been the discovery of the secret of fire, the raising of the sky, and the restraining of the Sun, all for the benefit of humankind. Mani in Polynesian mythology, is described to have decided to defeat the

goddess of death Hine-nui-te-po. She is described as an old woman and Mani decides to creep into his body. But while doing so, the woman gets woken up by the laughter of Mani's companions and Mani is cut into two. As Polynesian mythology is much more recent in history, Gilgamesh can be regarded as the first hero who tried to find immortality.

Before going into the further analysis of Gilgamesh/s quest, it would be pertinent to briefly describe the common pattern of the hero's journey as delineated by Joseph Campbell. According to this pattern, the hero is first introduced as person who is uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware. This creates sympathy towards the hero figure. It is shown that for some reason the hero is dissatisfied or is seeking something. This is the reason for the hero's restlessness. The hero must start on the journey or the adventure. Different reasons can bring about a change in hero's situation and can make him set out in search of something. Sometimes the hero is unsure whether to take up the challenge and refuses to undertake the journey. These are the first phases of the myth and are labeled as 'the call to adventure' and 'Refusal to call'. In case of refusal, the hero loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. The hero who begins the adventure is

provided aid by a protective figure. With guidance from the benign helper the hero comes to the threshold guardian who is at the entrance to the zone of magnified power. The threshold guardian are the powers that watch the boundary between the known and the unknown. The conflict with these powers is risky, yet the hero succeeds with his courage. This stage is called as 'The crossing of the first threshold'. Then comes a stage called 'The Belly of the whale' where the hero, instead of conquering the threshold guardian, gets swallowed into the unknown. These stages comprise of the First phase termed as 'Departure' after which the second phase 'Initiation' starts. This phase consists of 'The Road of Trials' that are to be faced before the hero comes to the stage of 'The Meeting with the Goddess'. This is the final test after which the hero wins the boon of love. But then the woman figure becomes tainted. This symbol of life becomes intolerable to the pure soul. Here the woman becomes the symbol of defeat and is termed by Campbell as "Woman as the Temptress". This is succeeded by the stage called as "Atonement with the Father" where the hero opens his soul to his father and the two are atoned. Then come the stages labeled as 'Apothesis' and 'The Ultimate Boon' in which immortality and illumination are enjoyed. In the final or the third phase 'Return' there is first the stage of 'refusal of the Return' which is followed by 'The

Magic Flight’ in which the hero is explicitly commissioned to return to the world. The hero is brought back with the stage ‘Rescue from without’. Then there is ‘the crossing of the Return Threshold’ after which the hero becomes ‘Master of the Two Worlds’ and has ‘The Freedom to Live’

To a considerable extent, the journey of Gilgamesh fits the pattern delineated by Campbell. In the first phase, like Campbell has described, Gilgamesh leaves the comfortable and familiar world and ventures into an unknown territory. The Scorpion-man who guards the passage of the sun at the Mashu mountain can be regarded as the ‘threshold guardian’. Gilgamesh does not have to fight with him because he lets Gilgamesh pass after listening to the king’s sad account. Here the first phase can be seen to be ending with Gilgamesh going into the cavern which is dark and Gilgamesh has to run the race against time, this can be called as the ‘Belly of the Whale’ after the first phase of ‘Departure’ the ‘Initiation’ begins with Gilgamesh emerging out of the dark cavern into the land of brightness. Here he meets Siduri, the alewife who is a tavern keeper at the edge of the world. The road of trails for Gilgamesh starts. First he has to fight with the boatman of Utnapishtim – Urshanabi before Urshanabi agrees to take him to



Utnapistim. The voyage to Utnapishtim over the 'Waters of Death' is dangerous but Gilgamesh succeeds in reaching the immortal being. Utnapishtim like Shamash, Siduri, tells him that he cannot have what he has come for. Gilgamesh fails the final test of remaining awake. Here the pattern of Campbell's hero cannot be seen to be running parallel with Gilgamesh narrative. Gilgamesh must once again face failure. At the instance of his wife, Utnapishtin tells him where to get a plant that rejuvenates the living. Gilgamesh, with his courage and boldness is able to secure this plant; but again it is stolen by a snake from him. In this way, Gilgamesh fails twice. There are no boons for him or the stage of 'Apotheosis'. He has to carry out his 'Return' with no prize. But at a deeper level, Gilgamesh's return is not with failure. He has gained a certain knowledge which he himself had denied from his person. Like every human being, he had realized at Enkidu's death that sooner or later he would die. This knowledge had come to him as a shock. He had felt defeated at that point. The warrior in him had felt cornered. With his instincts he had set out to defeat what he had presumed to be his enemy-death. At that point of time Gilgamesh had felt that life had no meaning because it inevitably led to death. This feeling is more acute than what most human beings experience normally. Most of human beings try to forget about death and succeed. But a hero like Gilgamesh

struggles. In fact the realization of ones mortality is one of the most basic differences between human beings and animals. But a person like Gilgamesh cannot face it squarely because everything he has done in his life has a certain intensity that is far greater than what a common person can experience.

The last phase of Gilgamesh brings the essential message of the text. Here the Jungian theory individuation can help to see clearly what the narrative aims to convey. In Jungian psychology individuation expresses the process of development of an individual self out of an undifferentiated unconscious. Gilgamesh has carried out this journey – through the dark cavern, over the ‘Waters of Death’. When a person attains individuation the components of his immature psyche became integrated into a whole. Gilgamesh’s denial about the inevitability of death showed the lack of maturity. After his failures he is shown to return to Uruk with a certain knowledge. This is the knowledge of his self. With the return of Gilgamesh the process of his psychological integration is complete. He went into the journey as a wild man, wearing animal skins, he comes out as a human being, aware of his limitations and moreover, an idea of what he has to do next. Across all the civilization, the different philosophies and religions have tried to

bring out a plausible answer to the complex phenomenon of death. As it has been seen earlier in the foregoing discussion, no such explanation has been clearly evident from the Sumerian texts. The inevitability of death has been expressed in some of the myths. The myth of Adapa is noteworthy in this regard. In the Sumerian mythology seven sages are sent by the wise god Ea to bring knowledge about civilization to mankind. Adapa is the first of these who gave knowledge about proper religious rites. Adapa has been described as a fisherman who broke the wings of the South Wind called as Ninlil because the wind overturned his boat. Because of this action he was called before the greatest of the gods Anu. Adapa's patron god Ea instructed him to apologize for this actions. Ea also warned Adapa not to eat or drink anything that was offered to him while he was in the god's assembly because that food or drink would bring him death. When Adapa humbly apologized to Anu for his actions, the god was impressed by his immortal. But Adapa, following the advice of his patron god, unwittingly refused this food and consequently remained a mortal man. This myth aptly indicates that immortality was not meant for humankind. It means that the Sumerian mythology and religion could not provide any other answer to the question raised in Gilgamesh's mind – "Must I also die and perish?." Now, the text of Gilgamesh narrative, as it is firmly rooted in

the Sumerian tradition, must bring its protagonist to accept this answer only as the solution to his problem. This problem is not merely physical but also psychological. In Jungian psychology, the individuation process heals the psychic wounds. Here in the case of Gilgamesh, it can be seen that in the end he has calmly accepted the reality of death and hence his psychic wounds also seem to have healed.

James Hillman's archetypal psychology has also to be considered alongside Jung's analytical psychology while attempting an archetypal analysis of the Gilgamesh epic, and references to Hillman's theory have already been made in the present study earlier. The most important concept in Hillman's theory is that of 'Soul making'. Hillman borrowed this term from John Keats and used it to describe the process through which an individual establishes deep connection with himself/herself, other individuals, and with the world at large. The importance is given to the present moment rather than the individual's wishes for the future. Here the individual comes to accept and moreover, give priority to his/her humanity, his/her basically wounded psyche/his/her essentially human nature. This means recognizing that there are certain limits over human beings quest. It may be a quest for perfection or a quest for transcendence and transformation. Most

importantly, 'Soul making' means embracing the prospect of inevitable death and understanding how this facet of life gives meaning and substance to our days or the time in which we are alive. As Hillman puts it in Archetypal Psychology :

So the question of soul-making is "what does this event, this thing, this moment move in my soul? What does it mean to my death? ". the question of death enters because it is in regard to death that the perspective of soul is distinguished most starkly from the perspective of natural life. (39)

The process of soul making involves the turning inwards of a person. Hillman, in *Senex and Puer* (Ed. And Intro by Glen Slater. Putnam : Spring Pub. Inc 2005) describes the 'puer qeternus' as the individual who is unwilling to admit defect and instead of turning inward means going deeper into one's soul life. This action leads to what is, in terms of psychology, called as 'containment'. The psyche of the individual is viewed as a container. The individual is expected to grow in order to hold his/her energies and emotions until these can be acknowledged and experienced consciously. In the former part of the epic Gilgamesh acts like the 'puer aeternus', always turning outward, seeking glory in the outer world and never turning inward. Later, this

circumstance changes, and his final journey makes him turn inwards. This turning inwards is important for him to attain wholeness. The change that occurs can be expressed in Hillman's words as described in Senex and Puer as

The shift from anima-mess to anima – vessel shows in different ways : as a shift from weakness and suffering to humility and sensitivity, from bitterness and complaint to a taste for salt and blood; from focus upon the emotional pain of a wound – its causes parameters, cures – to its imaginal depths, from displacement of the womb onto women and 'femininity' to its locus in one's own bodily rhythm (232)

When Gilgamesh loses the chance to win immortality, he is given the location of the rejuvenating herb. When he plucks this plant from the deep sea, again it is stolen from him by a serpent. At the second failure Gilgamesh weeps bitterly and reaches the conclusion that his quest is finished. He asks urshanabi, who is his companion on the journey back to Uruk, why is he still alive? What is the purpose of his life? The psyche of Gilgamesh is wounded and it is not yet ready to accept the woundedness. But the journey to Uruk is a transforming journey because after reaching the destination Gilgamesh recognizes who he is.

He says that it is he who built the wall of Uruk and describes the city. He comes to accept the present moment in his life. He connects with himself and his surroundings. In Hillman's terms then the process of Gilgamesh "soul making" is complete here.

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## Web Resources

Academy for Ancient Texts:

[www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/](http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/)

Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL): [www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk](http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk)

Internet Sacred Text Archive: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/eog/>

[www.gilgameshonline.com](http://www.gilgameshonline.com)