

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Mohamed Khider University - Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English



Dissertation submitted as a partial fulfillment for the Master degree.

Option: literature and American civilization

**Textual Symbolism Between Mythology and
Theology in the Epic of *Gilgamesh***

The Candidate:

Belaid Abd El Hak

Board of Examiners:

- Dr. Lamjed El Hamel Supervisor
- Ms. Bougofa Zeyneb President
- Ms. Djaalal Merriem Examiner
- Mr. Belgron Adel Examiner

2021/2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Dedication

I thank Allah Almighty for the strength and patience he has given me to accomplish this work.

To my caring, generous parents Ahmed and Maalam Fatima.

To my loving, mother Maalam Salima.

To my supportive brothers Riad and Radwen, my sister Hakima and her husband Taher, and my wise sister Sabrina.

To my uncle Massouad for his ongoing support, and his family.

To all my supportive friends especially Islam and Nesrine.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Lamjed El Hamel who spared no effort to enrich the work and to provide me with the necessary guidance and academic advice. I would like to thank him also for his hospitality and modesty every time we meet. I also would like to thank the Department of English for the support. I extend my deepest gratitude to all my teachers in the Department of English and to my teachers who taught me during my first year.

Abstract

The Epic of Gilgamesh is a collection of Mesopotamian myths about Gilgamesh, the mythological hero-king of Uruk, and his half-wild companion, Enkidu, as they embark on a number of difficult and dangerous missions and adventures, and eventually leading Gilgamesh to pursuit the secret of immortality following his friend's death. The purpose of this study is to conduct a thorough examination of symbolism within the story, in order to discover the interrelationship between these symbolisms and the disciplines of mythology and theology, with a focus on the symbolic connotations of religious discourse. Thus, we tend to approach and analyze this masterpiece from a symbolic and theological perspectives to elicit its themes and motifs.

Keywords: Mythology, Theology, Symbolism, Discourse, History, the epic of Gilgamesh.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgments	III
Abstract	IV
Table of Contents	V
General Introduction	01
 Chapter 01: Introductory to the Field of Theology	
Introduction	04
1.1. Definition and Historical Foundations of Theology	05
1.1.1 Definition	
1.1.2 Origin	
1.2.Types of Theology	07
1.2.1. Biblical theology	
1.2.2. Historical theology	
1.2.3. Systematic theology	
1.2.4. Practical theology	
1.3.The Importance of Theology	10
1.4.Theology and Religion	11
1.5.Theology and Literature	12
Conclusion.....	13

Chapter 02: An Overview of Mythology

Introduction	16
2.1. Definition and Origin	17
2.1.1 Definition	
2.1.2 Origin	
2.2. Types of Mythology	19
2.2.1. Etiological Mythology	
2.2.2. Psychological Mythology	
2.2.3. Historical Mythology	
2.3. The Function of Mythology	20
2.4. The Importance of Mythology	21
2.5. Mythology and Literature	23
2.6. Relation of Mythology and Narrative Forms	24
2.6.1. Fable	
2.6.2. Legends	
2.6.3. Folktale	
Conclusion	26

Chapter 03: Major Study of Symbolisms in the Epic of Gilgamesh

Introduction	29
--------------------	----

3.1. Conceptualizing the Myth	30
3.2. The history, culture and religion behind the Epic of Gilgamesh	30
3.3. The Significance of the Epic of Gilgamesh	32
3.4. Symbolism in the Epic of Gilgamesh	32
3.4.1. Dreams	
3.4.2. The story of the flood	
3.4.3. The serpent	
3.4.4. The Cedar Forest	
Conclusion	39
General Conclusion.....	41

Works cited

ملخص

General Introduction

After the Pyramid Texts, the Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the world's oldest sacred texts. It is a long narrative poem with heroic themes that possesses the epic qualities of seriousness and sadness. The first Standard Babylonian version was written between the 13th and 10th centuries BC by a priest named Sîn-lqi-unninni. The Epic of Gilgamesh is an ancient Mesopotamian epic poetry. Human connections, loneliness, friendship, love, and other themes are explored throughout the epic. It is meant to reach out to anyone who has pondered the meaning of existence in the face of death.

The story of Gilgamesh is told in the form of a long poem about a heroic man. Part of what makes this story epic is the fact that several stories about Gilgamesh are told inside the epic. This work seeks to examine the Gilgamesh myth through several lenses for a variety of purposes. Moreover, symbolisms are literary tactics that can have a range of effects on a piece of writing to represent what something or someone represents. This is how an author conveys a fresh meaning to the reader. The epic introduces the reader to several types of symbolism that highlights the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology.

The analytical technique was used to perform a major analysis of symbolism within the story in order to determine the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology in the epic of Gilgamesh epic. The latter permits us to investigate how this symbolism functions as a bridge between the disciplines of mythology and theology. Some relevant questions must be answered in this regard, including: what is the meaning of the mythology and theology? And how do they relate to the world of literature? What are the roles of symbols in the epic of Gilgamesh? , what is the importance of the epic of Gilgamesh as a story?

The dissertation's first chapter is a theoretical overview that will focus on the meaning of the term "theology." Furthermore, there has been significant discussion about what this statement signifies, whether it alludes to a simple religion or historical setting or something more profound. As a result, this thesis digs into the historical context of theology and its four fundamental pillars. A broad discussion of theology and religion and theology and literature, as well as how they affect one another.

The second part of this dissertation will shed light on the discipline of mythology; Chapter two is an attempt to analyze the definition of the term Mythology as well as the term myth; additionally, this term may have factual or fictional origins; thus, the second element to be dealt with in this chapter is the term's origin. After discussing the broad origin and substance of mythology, we will also discuss its types, relevance, and function, as it is easy to lose sight of this when reading about various legends that involve barbarian, hilarious, horrifying, or emotional episodes. A general summary of theology and literature is provided at the end of the chapter. In order to establish a probable connection and its connections to other story types.

The following ideas are depicted concisely and adequately in the dissertation's last chapter: the meaning of "epic," the history, society, and religion of the Gilgamesh epic, and the significance of the Gilgamesh epic as a story in addition, to address the issue of desertion, a thorough study of symbolism within the story was carried out in order to discover the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology in the Gilgamesh epic.

Chapter One

Introduction to the Field of

Mythology

Introduction

Theology is a broad field that can be divided into smaller divisions and characterized in more specific, though contentious, terms. It is contentious not only about the primary issues it addresses, but also about the meaning of the term "Theology" in general. In other words, in order to comprehend theology and its surroundings, one must first grasp the history of the term, which has been a fruitful arena for debate and criticism.

In this chapter, we will discuss theoretical basis in the topic of theology. The first thing to be addressed is the definition of the term itself. This phrase has sparked much debate as to what it means, whether it refers to a simple religion or historical setting or something more profound.

Over time, theologies have devised methods of organizing this complexity in order to make theology more understandable. Currently, a typical approach to this arrangement is to divide theology into four areas of attention; we will observe these four primary pillars, or sorts. In terms of giving specific areas of contemplation, these four categories are foundational. When studying theology, we may choose to concentrate on one of them. Each can provide a more in-depth insight.

After going over the fundamental pillars of this discipline, we will also discuss the differences between religion and theology in addition to general review of theology and literature and how they impact one another. All of these concepts will be covered in detail in this chapter.

1.1. Definitions and Historical Foundations

1.1.1. Definition

According to Webster's dictionary, Theology is defined as "the science of God or religion; the science that deals with the existence, character, and characteristics of God, his laws and rules, the truths we must believe, and the obligations we must fulfill."(Webster's dictionary) This field is taught in a number of universities throughout the world. Many theological research centers have been established, not only in the literary field, but also in other fields such as culture and history. Many literary works began to develop under the term "theology." There are countless publications, articles, books, and critiques connected to theological studies.

Augustine of Hippo, often known as Saint Augustine, a theologian and philosopher of Berber descent, described theology as "rational conversation regarding the deity" in the first half of the fifth century. Theology is an endeavor to comprehend God as He has been presented.

Augustus Hopkins Strong, a great twentieth-century theologian, defined it as "the science of god and the relationships between god and the universe" (p.12). Furthermore, Charles Hodge defined it as "the science of the truths of divine revelation" (first volume, 1) in so far as those realities concern the nature of God and our relationship to Him as His creations, sinners, and objects of redemption.

St Anselm provided a fundamental definition of theology. He referred to it as "faith seeking understanding," and for many, this is the genuine role. Another point of view was voiced by Peter Abelard, who stated, "I must comprehend before I can believe." Theologians tend to fall into these categories. First, some study theology in order to

progress from faith to a more complete knowledge of that faith. On the other hand, some people study theology because they want to know what Christians believe.

In fact, if we seek up the definition of this term, we will discover that it is referred to as "the study of God." This can entail, for example, researching one's religious beliefs. This can be divided into three parts: understanding God's nature, qualities, and interventions. Comprehending one's ideas about God is essential for understanding one's opinions about other things. They also state: ('the systematic study of the nature of the divine and, more broadly, religious belief.') It is taught as an academic subject that focuses on the distinctive content of examining the supernatural, but it also addresses religious epistemology (Wikipedia). In sum, theology is a set of intellectual and emotional commitments about God and man, whether justified or not, that govern one's views and actions. Neither the word nor the concepts it strives to communicate are irrelevant. It is the initial quest for knowledge and wisdom.

1.1.2. Origin

One could argue that our contemporary understanding of theology began with the Greeks. The term theology comes from the Latin *theologia*, which means "study [or understanding] of God [or the gods]," which comes from the Greek *theos* ("God") and *logos* ("reason"). If the phrase is used broadly, it functions similarly to philosophy or worldview. Despite the fact that it derived its substance and approach from Christianity. The discipline's themes include, among other things, God, mankind, salvation, and the study of the final things.

Among the ancients, almost any discussion about the gods could be classified as theology. Plato, Socrates' student, appears to have been the first to use the term theology, describing it as the dominion or realm of poets. He referred to this as the realm of forms or concepts. On the other hand, according to his pupil Aristotle (384–

322 BCE), theology was the study of the highest form of reality, and the work of "theologians" needed to be contrasted with the work of philosophers like himself. Theologians spend much of their time studying various religions in order to gain a better understanding of them. Theologians can study a variety of themes, including biblical analysis, comparative religion, ethics, and history. Nonetheless, Aristotle concentrated on three theoretical, or speculative, modes of knowing: mathematical, scientific, and theological, with theology being the "most noble" (Britannica)

Theology may have been an established endeavor prior to the arrival of Christianity, but it was Christianity that transformed theology into a substantial discipline with a large impact on other disciplines of study.

1.2. Types of Theology

Theological perspectives are diverse and numerous; therefore, when discussing theology, we must be aware that there are four categories that may be classified as Biblical theology, Historical theology, Systematic theology, and Practical theology.

1.2.1. Biblical Theology

Biblical theology has been notoriously difficult to define since scholars have used the term in many ways. (Carson, 89) but simply described, biblical theology is the theology of the Bible. That is, it is not our theology, but the theology of the biblical writers. It is their religious beliefs, (DR. J. KSTENBERGER). Biblical theology is linked to but distinct from three other major branches of theological research in that it focuses on theology contained in the Bible as its writers addressed their specific circumstances. The method is especially suited to displaying the originality of biblical writers, with the goal of reproducing and forming the thoughts of the writers who are the focus of study at the time.

In his introduction to *The Biblical World*, George B. Stevens stated that biblical theology is linked to exegesis, which is the critical study of books from beginning to end, trying to trace the writer's thoughts in the order of their development in that particular book. Theologians place themselves in the time, age, and circumstances of the writer with whom they deal in order to comprehend the meaning, form, matter, and thoughts of the writer. In addition, one significant benefit of biblical theology is that it provides a method for studying and learning from each author of Scripture. It can help us to unify the Gospels, and it also traces the Bible's unfolding tale. (Bruno ,2017) The Bible teaches us one tale about our Creator God, who created everything and controls over everything.

1.2.2. Historical Theology

Historical theology is a theological study that can be applied to a variety of research areas. It explores the socio-historical and cultural mechanisms that give rise to theological concepts, claims, and systems as a field of theology. Theologians frequently divide historical theology into four major time periods: the Patristic Period, the Middle Ages, the Reformation Periods, and the Modern Period, Alister E. McGrath has recently had a significant influence on the substance of historical theology through his different books, for example, he explains it as follows:

'A branch of theological inquiry which aims to explore the historical development of Christian doctrines, and identify the factors which were influential in their formulation and adoption. Historical theology therefore has direct and close links with the disciplines of church history and systematic theology'. (8).

Geoffrey Bromiley published his historical theology in 1978, stating that historical theology serves an important function in describing how theologians and the church engaged with God's word. He continues his explanation and approaches by focusing on

individual theologians rather than the origin and historical development of doctrine. Guretzki and Nordling define it as "the division of theological study that strives to explain and characterize how the church read Scripture and produced doctrine throughout its history, from the time of the apostles to the current day from another viewpoint" (Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms. 1999 p.59).in short, historical theology investigates how people have understood various beliefs throughout history and strives to comprehend the evolution of the doctrines, noting how changes within the church have influenced various doctrines.

1.2.3. Systematic theology

The division of theology into systems that explain its various topics is known as systematic theology. Many books of the Bible, for example, contain information regarding angels. Because no single book contains all of the information about angels, systematic theology collects all of the material about angels from all of the books of the Bible and organizes it into a system known as angelology. Theology, according to Carson (2018), tackles questions such as what the Bible teaches us about specific themes. Or, more specifically, what is true about God and His universe?

The focus of systematic theology is focused on the collecting and summary of all biblical verses on a subject, and it aims to explain Scripture's teachings in succinct, intelligible, and properly stated words. At times, in order to teach ourselves and others what the entire Bible teaches, we must compile and condense all verses on a specific topic.

Systematic theology has been characterized in numerous ways by theologians. However, we may understand the basic themes of systematic theology by looking at a definition from Louis Berkhof's well-known Systematic Theology, which he produced in the mid-twentieth century. "Systematic theology strives to provide a systematic

presentation of all doctrinal truths of the Christian religion," he wrote. In fact, this straightforward definition emphasizes three characteristics of systematic theology: the term "truth," the presentation of truth in a "systematic" manner, and the framework of the "Christian religion."

1.2.4. Practical theology

Practical theology is not widely discussed, although it is a highly popular sort of thought. Richard Baxter (1615—1691) covers a wide range of practical theology concerns in his work *A Christian Directory of Practical Theology*, which was immensely influential upon its publication. As a result of this influence, Practical Theology became known as an application of the Christian life based on the study of biblical principles.

Friedrich Schleiermacher is regarded as the father of practical theology as a branch of theological study. To grasp this, one must consider his broader definition of theology, as well as his views on religion and Christianity.

According to GotQuestions, "the aim of Practical Theology is to progress beyond simply contemplating or comprehending theological truths to applying those doctrines in everyday Christian life so that we contribute to the world becoming what God intends it to be." As the name implies, practical theology is a technical term for Christian life theory that focuses on how all of Scripture's teaching affects how we live today. Indeed, the main relevance is to analyze and reflect on religious activities in order to comprehend the theology enacted in those practices and how theological theory and theological practices might be better matched, changed, or improved.

1.3. The Importance of Theology

Theology is the study of faith as well as the expression of those beliefs. What is the significance of this discipline? Theology is critical not only for academic Christians, but

for all believers who seek to do the work of spreading the Gospel. In other words, it provides a process of systematic reflection, it helps to detach us from our prejudices, and it provides us with an overarching framework by which to perceive the Bible. It also gives a variety of methods for studying and comprehending the scriptures in light of thousands of years of history.

When used correctly, theology may not only provide us with more language to speak with, but it can also work as a filter to remove extraneous doctrines, beliefs, and traditions. Proper theology, then, is the antidote to Traditionalism's "lifeless obedience to prior theological formulations using dry language that no longer has significance for people." (James Pedlar). All in all, Theology must not only become a map of guidance, but must also become an experience entailing life-transformation. The objective of theology has always been and always will be the preservation and integration of Biblical truth.

1.4. Theology and religion

Theology and religion are two disciplines that are closely related and frequently mistaken. The misconception derives from the fact that both revolve around a superior power, God. According to philologist Max Müller in the nineteenth century, the Latin *religiō* is the basis of the English term religion; it was originally used to imply just respect for God or the gods. (p. 33). In various respects, theology varies from religion. First, theology is primarily concerned with researching God and faith. It is only concerned with specific beliefs and religious viewpoints, and it also includes what a person believes about God. Thus, theology is more like a science, whereas religion is a belief and worship in god(s), though it is crucial to note that not all religions believe in god. Furthermore, other faiths, such as Christianity and Islam, believe in only one God,

making them monotheistic religions. Polytheistic faiths, on the other hand, believe in more than one god; examples include Hinduism and Taoism. Indeed, studying religion works best when the learner is open to examining other religious ideas and practices. Any predetermined attitudes and judgments based on personal religious beliefs may impede learning progress, whereas, to study theology, you must have some type of faith, as opposed to religion, which does not require any kind of faith to learn and thrive. In short, Anyone can see that religion and theology are inextricably linked subjects. Looking at each subject separately reveals how they overlap as well as their differences. Religious truths and ideas should have been established first in order for theology to evolve. As a result, theology might be said to operate on religion.

1.5. Theology and Literature

According to Robert Lowth in his Lectures on *the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, poetry is the natural language of theology because in the early nineteenth century, the line between theologians and poets was undefined because they were frequently considered as part of the same matrix (1753). Literary authors and theologians have been involved in Plato's debate between the philosopher and the poet; theology, on the one hand, is serious because it deals with the sources of all real being, with reason and faith defining it, whereas poetics and literary theories, on the other hand, deal with fictitious and own fantasized creatures, with thoughts, imagination, and credulity propelling the literary world. Many scholars agreed at the beginning of the twenty-first century that both domains should cooperate rather than argue with one another since they have a shared interest in the formation of meaning in the human conscience and consciousness. Writers such as William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Donne, Christopher Marlowe, and Alexander Pope have all linked their works with biblical

theology. Theology and its impact in the formation of literature cannot be overlooked. It must be given its proper weight, age, and value.

According to Shaheen (2011), current scholars are interested in finding biblical references and concepts in literary works because of the importance of theology, which has had an unavoidable influence on the development of English literature by allowing the world's greatest dramatists and poets to create plays and use them as a vehicle of expression for the betterment of humanity. For example, in his play "All's Well That Ends Well," William Shakespeare illuminates the theology of grace. John Milton exemplifies theology of freedom of choice, John Donne exemplifies Trinitarian Theology, Christopher Marlowe focuses on Doctor Faustus' theology, and Alexander Pope exemplifies theology of participation in his work. All of these notions have resulted in the formation of a high level of biblical theology within the literary world, particularly where the authors are unable to communicate their contemporary difficulties without the touch and expression of biblical theology.

Conclusion

Based on what has been discussed thus far, we may conclude that theology is the study of God and religion, which is closely related to philosophy, because both subjects deal with comparable concerns about life and God. In other words, theology is the study of the nature of God, divine revelation, and the god-human connection. The phrase has been used for centuries. Its roots can be traced back to the Greek word "théo," which means "God," and the suffix "logy," which means "study of." Not to mention that it may be traced back to the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato, with whom the concept first appears, as did his disciple Aristotle.

As a result, the term theology was coined to assist theologians in better understanding their own religious tradition, another religious tradition, or to enable them to examine

the essence of divinity without reference to any specific tradition. When discussing theology, we must keep in mind that there are various types or branches, such as Biblical theology, Historical theology, which focuses on how Christian beliefs and practices evolved over time, Systematic theology, which studies divine attributes and the nature of God, and finally Practical theology, which studies religious activities.

Despite the debates initiated by thinkers and theologians, researchers have made an effort to demonstrate that theology, religion English literature are inextricably linked. Justification can be found in the works of William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Donne, Christopher Marlowe, and Alexander Pope, all of whom attempted to justify the importance of theology in English literature. As a result, readers can go into the realm of literature to grasp the significance of biblical theology.

Chapter two
An Overview of Mythology

Introduction

Knowledge is primary unit that has a source. Thus, Myths are regarded as the first source of knowledge for the primitive people to acquaint themselves with the world around. So in this chapter, we will embark on the definition of the term 'Mythology' as well as the term 'myth'. Despite the use of it to mean fiction; nevertheless, mythology is rather stories that might tell us about reality. The simplest and most direct way to approach mythology is to look at its subject matter and origin. In the broadest terms, myths are traditional stories about gods, kings, and heroes. These myths may have factual origin or fictional origins. For that, the second element to be dealt with in this chapter is the origin of the term, its function and importance.

After going through the overall origin and content, we will also deal with the types, importance and function of mythology since It's easy to lose sight of this when reading about other mythologies which contain ridiculous, barbarian, humorous, horrific, or emotional incidents. However, myths have a certain dignity and beauty precisely because they deal with significant and important issues. In addition, they serve a deeper role in both ancient and modern cultures. The relationship between literature and myth is one of mutual reliance. Despite the fact that neither of the two can exist on its own. Thus, in this final element we will go into a general overview between theology and literature for the purpose of a possible connection and relation to other narrative forms.

2.1. Definition and origin

2.1.1. Definition

It has proven impossible to construct a single, complete definition of myth. No single description can adequately encompass all of the numerous types of stories that can validly be classified as myths based on one or more criteria.

‘Mythology is a broad term encompassing the study of myths, stories, beliefs, and the knowledge of the world through specific features told in oral tales to teach society values and ethic’(Bulfinch's Mythology,3) . Nevertheless, Joshua J. Mark (2016) stated that mythology is the study and interpretation of often sacred tales or fables of a culture known as myths or the collection of such stories which deal with various aspects of the human condition: good and evil; the meaning of suffering; human origins; the origin of place-names, animals, cultural values, and traditions; the meaning of life and death; the afterlife; and celestial stories of the gods or a god. Myths are found in every culture around the world and are used to explain natural events, where people came from, and how their civilization evolved. Indeed, if we seek up the definition of this term, we will discover that mythology is a genre of folklore that includes stories that explain natural phenomenon, the history of the work and explanation of the universe.

Don Bahr upholds in his article, “what happened to Mythology?”Provides the definition of the term and ‘Mythology’ as follows “mythology is a multi-tale or multi-myth account of origins as told by one person to another” (Vol. 9, 44). For him, the mythology we are interested in were told from memory in regular speaking voice, and they may have included songs that were apparently taken to be the exact words of ancients, these mythical tales have been passed down through generations.

Modern astronomers and astrophysicists can explain the genesis of the universe, whereas archaeologists and historians strive to explain the origin of human cultures. However, in the distant past, before any sciences existed, mythology explained the origins of the world and society. In fact, Online Etymology dictionary defines it as “the myths dealing with the gods, demigods, and legendary heroes of a particular people, exposition of myths, the investigation and interpretation of myths” (p.254).

The term myth is frequently misused to refer to fiction—something that never happened, a made-up story or fantastic tale that primitive people used to explain nature of the universe. But Myth is a way of thinking about the past and its event which they investigate these critical concerns through engaging stories, vivid characters, unforgettable events, and concepts that elicit our strongest emotions.

2.1.2. Origins

It is impossible to say when mythology began because it is said to have evolved from centuries of oral tradition. For example, Greek myths are most likely descended from stories spoken in the Minoan culture of Crete, which flourished from around 3000 to 1100 BCE. But The term mythology appears to have been coined in the nineteenth century to characterize myths about the beginnings of the universe and humans, particularly those of ancient civilizations such as the Assyrian civilization (from Mesopotamia), Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, among others. Mythology is the study of these myths, of which only fragments remain and which have changed over the span of these multi-millennial civilizations. A myth, though, is more than just a story, it is a living thing due to the manner in which it is conveyed, its evolution, and the religious beliefs that consecrate it.

The term Mythology derived from the Greek term mythos (story, thought, discourse); logos (speech), conveys an old story in itself, as myths were once communicated from person to person exclusively through the spoken word. But for my opinion, the term myth is derived from the Greek word mythos/o, which originally meant an unsubstantiated spoken story—a tale. It used to signify "proverb," "counsel," or "suggestion," although it was an archaic meaning around Homer's time. "Mythos" had become a "false or empty fiction" or "a story that replicates the truth" by the time of Koine Greek, in the 5th century AD (Hesychius Lexicon). That, I believe, is more in accordance with our modern understanding. Mythology becomes the "science of myths" by adding -ology.

2.2. Types of Mythology

There are many distinct forms of myths, but they can be divided into three categories: etiological myths, historical myths, and psychological myths.

2.2.1. Etiological Mythology

When many physical occurrences were not well understood or histories were not documented in the past, myths frequently evolved to provide etiologies, therefore, an etiological myth, also known as an origin myth, is a narrative that has evolved over time and has been recounted or written to explain the origins of various social or natural events. Creation myths are considered etiological, explaining how the universe, the world, or life in the world came into being. It does not have to account for the creation of a new entity or activity within the established order of creation, just as much as it can account for the creation of an ordered world out of primal chaos.

2.2.2. Psychological Mythology

Psychological myths take the reader on a trip from the known to the unknown, resulting in a psychological desire to balance the exterior world with one's own awareness of it.

Whatever the case may be, the plot of this type of myth usually involves a hero or heroine embarking on a journey to find their actual identity or fate and, in doing so, resolving a crisis while also giving an audience with some vital cultural value.

2.2.3. Historical Mythology

Historical myths relate a historical event using three key ways. They are about personal experiences, biographies, and historical events, and their objective is to inform and entertain readers. Historical myths language elements are generally written in past tenses to illustrate the event but elevate it with higher meaning than the real event.

Homer's epic 8th century BCE tale of the Iliad, which relates the story of the siege and fall of Troy, is considered the most famous historical myth.

2.3. The Functions of Mythology

Mythology is not a simple word that can be defined easily; instead, its functions and role must be investigated. Through various definitions and reading numerous myths from different cultures, readers might uncover some commonalities that lead them to assume that some myths are not traditional stories for a specific community, but rather universal traditions for the entire ancient population. These roles are covered by numerous authors, but no author presents them all in his work. Bolton, for example, attempts to discuss these functions under many labels. Some of these are also contested by Osborn and Burges.

First of all, Kirk, Osborn, and Bolton discuss a function, which links myths to rituals. Myths serve a variety of functions for the elderly, one of which is religious. The

religious people are the ancient Greeks and Romans. People think that gods and goddesses have tremendous power. The myths define many gods and goddesses and demonstrate their functions. So people know exactly which god or goddess to pray to when they are in need. Each religion has rituals that people must perform. Another function of mythology is to bring pleasure to the reader's because it is a fantastic source of entertainment. Caldwell refers to this function as the aesthetic function because of its propensity to produce pleasure and fulfillment. If these stories have been filmed, the themes they deal with provide enjoyment to both the readers and the viewers. Finally, Joseph Campbell described mythology in *The Hero with A Thousand Faces* as having four basic functions: The mystical, the cosmological, the sociological, and the pedagogical. The mystical function seeks to draw people's attention to the mystery and awe of the universe's and beings' creation. The cosmological function is to depict the shape and content of the universe. Myths are comprehensive explanations of the cosmos and its contents. The sociological function specifies "ethical laws," which provide people with guidelines to follow in their interactions with others. The educational function is to teach people how to conduct their lives in various situations.

2.4. The Importance of Mythology

Mythology has always been fundamental to all civilizations; humans have used myth to explain religion, history, and morality. Nevertheless, Mythology seeks to comprehend the world's primal significance. A desert stone, the reproduction of a rare species, or human life all require an explanation that will satisfy one's thirst for knowledge. Myth investigates and interprets events in space and time, especially those that are distant. Myth, strangely, only comprehends the present in this way. In a different way, than empirical science, explains the world through causes and effects. Every myth has its

origin story. Myths' liveliness and significance may be seen not only in their various retellings, but also in the way their gods, heroes, and creatures have inspired artists and authors throughout history.

Mythology is important because it demonstrates how different societies used to think about things they couldn't understand, as well as evidence of their beliefs. Humans would not have been able to grow in their ways of thinking and creating as far as they have without mythology, because myths are the foundations of what we have produced. In short, humans literally evolved by telling stories around a campfire. This is how we learn so every myth has a symbolic meaning; they've all got moral of the story. The "moral of the narrative" teach us all. As toddlers, ideals, attitudes, and examples of how not to act, as well as examples of how to act to a lesser extent, humans enjoy references because Myths provide context. It has a dark and a bright side that connects the universe.

Another major importance is that mythology serves as the foundation for many religions that are practiced. These particular myths are stories about struggles between good and evil. Every religion, old and modern, has stories like that. The protagonist, or hero, must face up against the antagonist, or villain. During that journey, the hero learns crucial ideals and morals that will help him beat the villain. It appears frequently in the Christian Bible as well as in ancient masterpieces such as Homer's *Odyssey*. The only reason mythology is still essential till now because it is pure storytelling. Everyone enjoys telling a good story or listening to someone else tells a fantastic story. As a student, I enjoy doing both. I appreciate hearing a good story so that I can tell it to someone else, whether it's my younger relatives or a community of fellow students.

2.5. Mythology and Literature

Mythology started as a collection of stories spoken around the fire by successive generations, and they are still passed down orally in some locations, with the introduction of writing, people began to write down their myths and adapt them in new ways, such as turning them into plays, poetry, or novels. From Homer's Greek epics to the sagas of the early Icelandic writers, some of the world's greatest literature is based on much older myths that were initially recounted orally. In fact, Mythology has always been "an essential component of writing." It not only provides a library of varied stories for the fictitious world-making of literature, but it also grows, adapts, or rewrites mythical aspects during the creative reception process. It also supplies the narrative methods from which writing evolves, as described in Aristotle's Poetics.

While mythology is rooted in oral tradition, it relies on translation into other media, particularly art and literature, to maintain and perpetuate its imagery as well as its "knowledge," which becomes retrievable in a variety of cultural, geographical, and chronological settings. Given that comprehending mythological aspects which can be found in art eventually needs their re-embedding into a literary dimension where they become "readable" and decipherable, thus literature emerges as the perfect conduit for the transmission of mythical stories. It is constituted by, and constitutive for the communication of myth. Furthermore, Mythology invokes our subconscious mind which is used in literature by making references to mythology. According to Northrop Frye, mythology provided subjects for some of the world's finest theatre, and comparable themes can be traced back to Renaissance literature, through Shakespeare (e.g., Hamlet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and eventually to modern poetry,

demonstrating the importance of mythology in writing. One could even argue that literature is mythology-based.

Their incredible and implausible nature, mixed with the persistent possibility of anything is what keeps mythology and literature alive. However, there are numerous distinctions between literature and mythology. For example, they were employed for various purposes and existed at various times. Myth serves numerous objectives, including social/political (e.g. to spread a myth about something to control people, to scare people when facts were not available). Literature, on the other hand, is more concerned with convincing and informing readers. There are further benefits to mythology that cannot be accomplished through literature, such as no boundaries to the world, no such thing as 'false,' and low risk. In addition, the sets of beliefs differ, as do their perspectives on the world. For example, the audience for literature is educated modern people, whereas the audience for mythology is from an older generation with less knowledge of the world and how it operates. This would imply that the two books have different target audiences, which would explain why they differ so significantly. Both were created by humans, although at different times.

2.6. Relation of Mythology to other Narrative Forms

The ancient stories were passed down orally from generation to generation and were stories about the world, how it works, and how people should treat one another, frequently delivering a lesson., fairy tales, folktales, and legends are examples of literary or narrative genres. In many ways, these genres are tied to mythology with similarity and differences.

2.6.1. Fable

The term fable comes from the Latin word *fabula*, which originally signified something similar to the Greek *mythos*. It, like mythology, came to denote a fake or false story. In addition, Fables, like certain myths, have characters that are personified animals or natural phenomena. Unlike myths, fables almost always end with a clear moral message. (The Fable, , Myth,: Differences and Examples, 2013) .Fables that are well-known include "Arabian Nights," "The Lion and the Mouse," and "The Tortoise and the Hare." many fables came from oral tradition and exist in every culture, but Aesop, a Greek slave thought to have lived around 560 BC, is the most famous 'writer' of these tales. Of course, many people dispute whether he composed all, or even part, of the fables we now call "Aesop's Fables." (Webster 1913).

2.6.2. Legends

Every culture has its own set of stories about various objects, people, places, and events. Some relate stories about real people, while others tell stories about imaginary characters with extraordinary abilities. Myths and legends are two examples of such stories. Widespread application of the term legend is usually to refer to a conventional story with a historical grounding. Between myth and legend, a relation can be formed. First, the term "legend" can also apply to a person with an impressive tale and accomplishment. A legend is a story about human individuals, who have superpowers, The primary distinction between myth and legend is that myth is a traditional narrative, especially one regarding the early history of people or describing a natural or social phenomenon, and often including supernatural characters, whereas legend is a traditional narrative that is sometimes commonly regarded as historical but has not been authenticated.

2.6.3. Folktale

Folktales are also the result of an oral tradition passed down by the "people" who told them. In *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (1970), British Classicist Geoffrey S. Kirk uses the term myth to denote stories with an ultimate purpose beyond simple story-telling, and folktale to denote stories that indicate simple social occasions, myths and folk tales frequently overlap due to their nearly same character. Nonetheless, it is the vital lessons or messages that myths and folk tales give to people that make them meaningful.

Conclusion

To conclude, the term mythology is a collection of stories about gods, heroes, and great cosmic events that are part of every culture around the world and are used to explain natural phenomena, where people came from, and how their civilization developed. It also deals with the creation of the universe and the human race. The gods' and spirits' nature, Mythology is obviously not constructed alone, but they serve a variety of purposes. They were designed from the beginning to answer numerous questions about the universe. They are similar to an encyclopedia in that they cover several sciences. Myths were the only source of knowledge, religion, and social charter for the ancient people. For Joseph Campbell's it is a collection of metaphors, or "an organization of symbolic images and narratives metaphorical of the possibility of human experience and fulfillment in a given culture at a given time." (Volume1) According to him, it has four primary functions: mystical, cosmological, sociological, and pedagogical. Furthermore, mythology is significant because it shows how many communities used to think about things they couldn't explain, as well as evidence of their beliefs. Myths come in various forms, but they can be grouped into three types: etiological myths, historical myths, and psychological myths.

The distinction between literature and myth is difficult in that myth cannot exist apart from literature and literature does not collapse in myth, there are both similarities and differences between literature and mythology. They are both significant human creations that will continue to play an essential role in the intellectual world. Literature will always have some element of myth, which will continue to impact our current world in the same manner that it has in the past. In addition, in many ways, these genres; folktale, legend and fable are tied to mythology with similarity and differences.

Chapter Three

Major Study of Symbolisms in the Epic of *Gilgamesh*

Introduction

The Epic of *Gilgamesh* is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia and one of the world's earliest known literary works. After the Pyramid Texts, it is the second oldest religious text. It is classified as epic because it is a long narrative poem with heroic subject and possesses the seriousness and pathos that have been designated as epic characteristics. It began as a collection of Sumerian traditions and poems in cuneiform writing originating from the early third or late second millennium BCE, which were eventually used as source material for a unified epic in Akkadian.

The first Standard Babylonian version, authored by a priest named *Sîn-lqi-unninni* and bearing the incipit *Sha naqba muru*, dates from the 13th to the 10th century BC. Now, only due to the first discovery of cuneiform fragments of Gilgamesh's story in 1853 in Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian Empire, thus, the modern generations manage to learn about it, to be exact, twelve-tablet variant has been found.

Throughout the epic, *Gilgamesh*, the fabled hero-king of Uruk, and his half-wild comrade, Enkidu, engage in adventures and encounters with creatures, monarchs, and Gods, providing a vivid and exotic tale. The epic's themes include human relationships, loneliness, friendship, love, and others. In fact, the standard version of the epic was thought to be a little difficult to grasp, but it conveys a meaningful message such as death is unavoidable, and it is intended to connect with every human being who has pondered the meaning of life in the face of death.

As a result, in this final chapter of this dissertation, a concise and sufficient depiction of the following ideas is provided: the definition of the term "epic," the history, culture and religion behind the epic of Gilgamesh, and the significance of the epic of Gilgamesh as a story. Finally, in order to address the desertion issue, a major study of symbolism within the story was conducted in order to determine the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology in the Gilgamesh epic.

3.1. Conceptualizing the Myth

An epic is a long narrative poem told by third person narrator, that is elevated and dignified in theme, tone, and consist of several characters apart from the main character who is always regarded to be a historical figure or a legendary hero, in fact the epic usually celebrates the hero's deeds and focuses on his adventures, but also includes supernatural or otherworldly obstacles circumstances in order to create almost impossible odds against the hero. The name Epic is derived from the ancient Greek word epos, which means "story, or poem." Common epics share a few features. First, they have a core hero who is extremely brave with unwavering will. Second, Epics typically have more fully worked characters that the audience needs to follow over a longer length of time, and finally, the poem's setting is enormous and could include land, oceans, or perhaps the entire universe. In short, The Epic of Gilgamesh is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia, is recognized as the first great epic work of literature, the poem is about Gilgamesh, a king who has become dissatisfied and disheartened by his authority, and his friend Enkidu, who embarks on risky expeditions with Gilgamesh.

3.2. The History, Religion and Culture behind the Epic of *Gilgamesh*

The fascinating account of The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the world's oldest known written manuscripts. Its historical and cultural setting dates back to roughly 2000 BCE. This story was recorded by a group of people who lived in ancient Mesopotamia, which means "the country between the rivers."(Wikipedia) It is situated in a fertile agricultural region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This region is today known as the Middle East, or Iraq. Sumerians wrote the initial version of the epic in Sumerian, with the context built from various Mesopotamian traditions. Historically, the Sumerians, the people of southern Mesopotamia whose civilized region of the Fertile Crescent flourished between 1750 and 4100 BCE and between the Tigris

and Euphrates rivers, were the first group of people known to have dominated the Mesopotamia region.

The story of *Gilgamesh*, the world's first epic hero, can still teach us a lot about Sumerian culture and religion. First, Mesopotamian cultures are regarded civilizations because their people had formed communities in the form of villages, planted their own food, tamed animals, and varied orders of labor. They demonstrated that fertile soil and knowledge is the key to a serendipitous factor for wealth and civilization since Sumerian culture had many schools. Second, thanks to the two rivers that supplied Mesopotamian culture with the ability to stretch the rivers waters into farm areas which resulted in engineering breakthroughs such as the construction of canals and dams. Few people are aware of the exact religion of Mesopotamia because Mesopotamian religion refers to the religious beliefs and practices of ancient Mesopotamia's civilizations, especially Sumer and Akkad, which were polytheistic, with adherents worshipping multiple principal gods; the gods were expressed and interpreted differently in each Mesopotamian age or society such as Ea, the deity of wisdom and magic, Anu, the sky god, and the god of earth, Enlil.

3.3. The Significance of the Epic of *Gilgamesh*

This epic is amazing and significant in the study of history, science, culture, and literature. This masterwork is considered to be the beginning of world literary history. It influenced current and contemporary works of literature, such as the account of Hercules' adventures. In that view, its origins date from the middle of the third millennium BCE, with most of its development taking place during the second millennium BCE.

One of the story's main functions is to describe one of the earliest Mesopotamian civilizations known to man. Uruk was the first of these civilizations, going back to roughly 3200 B.C. The Epic of Gilgamesh also demonstrates how the Mesopotamians dealt with authority as a civilization.

Scholars have regarded the Epic as one of the most important sources for the Old Testament. In reality, the Epic's tales of the Garden of Eden, Ecclesiastes' lyrics, and the Great Flood all serve as important sources. The Epic's central significance is to provide a depiction of the connection between man and the gods, which is not all that complicated. In fact, they resemble each other in appearance and conduct. They rely on one another to go about their daily lives and fulfill responsibilities. The gods experience the same feelings and emotions as mankind. Humans expect the gods to watch over them and keep them safe and on the right path.

3.4. Symbols in the Epic of *Gilgamesh*

After reading The Epic of *Gilgamesh*, I identified several symbols within the text that might be used to connect mythology and theology. This has helped me to enjoy reading the novel on a whole new level. In this sense, symbolisms are literary strategies that can influence a piece of writing in a variety of ways. It is also used in poetry and literature to depict what something or someone signifies. This is how an author transmits a new meaning to the audience. As a result, The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the oldest literary works known to mankind. This myth tells the story of King *Gilgamesh* of Uruk and his friend Enkidu's journey. Within the story, the reader is presented to aspects of a range of symbolism that demonstrate the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology.

3.4.1. Dreams

Dreams are important in the Gilgamesh myth, particularly because they play an important role in explaining how events happen. There are various reasons why an author could include a dream in their novel. For example, Gilgamesh and Enkidu are continually dreaming about things and events that indicate numerous aspects about their character: repressed impulses,

wishes, and anxieties for their future or past, or to predict things that might come, or to set the stage for a setting.

The dreams are interpreted as a symbol that connects mythology and theology; Dreams were always thought to be incredibly essential for divination in Mesopotamian mythology and also occasionally seen as a means of seeing into other worlds. It was believed that the soul, or a portion of it, migrated out of the sleeping person's body and visited the locations and people the dreamer saw in his or her sleep. Dreams were viewed as channels for heavenly revelations in Mesopotamian mythological writings. Some tribes even practiced incubation, in which they would sleep in a sacred location and wait for divinely inspired messages in their dreams. "Gudea, ruler of the Sumerian city of Lagash, recalls a dream in which the god Ningirsu appeared to him and gave him directions for building a temple". (Gudea Cylinder A 6:10f)

Dreams are one of God's most overlooked modes of communication, according to theology. It occurs for a multitude of reasons, including warning global leaders of impending events, providing revelation, and answering our own petitions and prayers. In fact, The Bible consistently shows God speaking to individuals through these generally experienced and perplexing phenomena. However, dream interpretation necessitated meticulous testing to establish that it originated from God (Deuteronomy 13). Jeremiah and Zechariah both cautioned against depending on dreams to represent God's revelation (Jeremiah 23:28).

"In the last days,' God says, `I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions,

and your old men will dream dreams." (Acts 2:17)

The mentioned act confirms that God continues to utilize dreams as a medium of communication, and that they often fall into one of three categories. Warning dream about a future attack from an adversary or a terrible time ahead, Vision that exposes the future of an individual or nation, and finally, Confirmation Dream, this simply confirms that what you believe to be true about a person or situation is in fact accurate.

A similar mindset is displayed in the epic of Gilgamesh when Gilgamesh has three dreams and his wise mother interprets the dreams for him. In Tablet One, his dreams of the meteor and axe are regarded as omens of the god-sent Enkidu “*there will come to you a mighty man, a comrade who saves his friend*” (1.249). In Tablet 4, Gilgamesh prays to Shamash, the sun god, for visions of the monster Humbaba. Thus, Gilgamesh encounters nightmares on his way to the Cedar Forest; he becomes frustrated in his quest during their way but Enkidu interprets his dreams and reassure him.

In the first dream, a mountain falls on them, symbolizing Humbaba's defeat in their future battle. A bull attacks them in the second dream. The bull, according to Enkidu, its Humbaba, but it could possibly be the Bull of Heaven that they fight later. Enkidu has a vision of himself in front of a council of gods, in which he dreams about his own death. In Tablet 7, according to the dream, Enkidu is already facing illness and certain death, and is tormented by dreams about the Underworld, but this dream enables Enkidu to explain in great detail all the horrors of the Underworld, which is enough to inspire Gilgamesh to seek immortality. The prophetic dreams that both Gilgamesh and Enkidu have are used to demonstrate man's weaknesses in the face of destiny, the dreams used repeatedly in the epic story with the goal of highlighting Mesopotamian mythology and theology and displaying a critical role in explaining the unfolding of events to the reader, not to mention the clarification of the connection between this symbol and the fields of mythology and theology.

3.4.2. The Story of the Flood

A flood is a symbol and affinity of fertility in both mythology and theology in its mild form. When a flood occurs in a more moderate form, it is always welcomed by farmers looking to grow crops, allowing entire civilizations to survive, on the other hand, is regarded as a destructive natural force. Historically, civilizations and tribes were unable to control floods, leaving them vulnerable to the dangers that accompanied them, which wiped out entire civilizations. In Mesopotamian mythology, Eridu Genesis 'Mesopotamian literature' an ancient Sumerian epic associated with the creation of the world, the building of cities, and an alternative flood story. Scholars' research has revealed the following story: "Once upon a time, the gods, whose peace was disturbed by the "noisy," that is, sinful deeds of man, decided to send a flood that would destroy him completely and wipe him off the face of the Earth." Samuel Noah Kramer (1967).

Nevertheless, another Mesopotamian flood myth is the story of Atrahasis, which tells of a wise man that was saved from an impending flood after one of the gods warned him to build a ship to save himself. In short, the flood myth is a motif or myth found in many different mythologies. The myth tells of a great flood sent out by the Gods to destroy civilization in an act of divine retribution. That is why floods are frequently associated with deities, as seen in many different mythologies.

The flood story, on the other hand, was mentioned from a theological standpoint. The story is found in the book of Genesis; humans could have avoided this incident if they had followed the correct path rather than following their own desires and impulses. The story features Noah as the hero of the Flood story. In his account, Noah is portrayed as the spiritual leader who was chosen by God to maintain the human race after his wicked contemporaries perished in the Flood. Genesis tells us that God saw that "every intention of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The wicked died and the righteous one was spared consequently, according to this narrative, the entire surviving human race descended from

Noah's three sons and their wives, as well as various animal species, from which stocks could be replenished. Gilgamesh, the Sumerian hero, traveled the world in search of a way to avoid death. On one of his journeys, he met an old man named Utnapishtim, who informed Gilgamesh a story from long ago. The gods sent a flood that engulfed the earth, which has been raging for six days and nights. It passes and the sea calms down on the seventh day. The reason is not nearly as obvious as it is in the Book of Genesis, as it stated in the epic that the heart of the gods prompted them to bring a flood, so one might say it was a result of divine caprice, but according to Ea's speech to Enlil, "the flood was sent because of a man's sin". Similar to Noah, Utnapishtim and his wife were the only survivors of the mythological flood, having saved human and animal life in the great boat he built. The god Enlil then deified the couple as a reward for following the divine command to build an ark, Utnapishtim then began to offer sacrifices to the gods, who were pleased with his offerings, and Enlil, their king, blessed him and his wife, saying: "*Until now Utnapishtim was mortal, Henceforth, Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like the gods, Utnapishtim shall dwell in a faraway land, at the mouth of the rivers*" (Tablet XI).

To conclude, the flood story is a mass disaster that can account for the deaths when it is destructive, it symbolizes change and destruction. On the contrary, it is a symbol of fertility and change. Flood symbolism in the epic of Gilgamesh is common in mythology and theology, where it served as a symbolic meaning sent out by the gods to tell humans they were dissatisfied with their actions.

3.4.3. The Serpent

It can't be argued that the serpent is one of the major negative and positive symbolisms that interrelate both mythology and theology, an instigator of chaos and evil, temptation, trickery, sin, and because it lives in holes and cracks in the ground, they were usually regarded as defenders of the underworld and were the emissaries between the two worlds or a powerful

creature with intelligence, representing fertility, wisdom, and immortality, lived by reason rather than instinct, and yet, their thought processes were as alien to humans as their movements. By studying the general symbolism of serpents in the epic of Gilgamesh and, it is simple to discover the important but slightly different roles that this creature played.

The snake is one of the manifestations that appear in Gilgamesh's path. The snake confronts him while he is looking for everlasting life, which is contained within a flower. The serpent tracks Gilgamesh's movements all the way to the flower of immortality wish, which confirms the serpent's trickery in order to accomplish its mission, whereas Gilgamesh had to learn about it; he did not come across it on his own. It was able to smell out the flower and snatch it when he stopped to rest and take a bath, demonstrating how the snake was wiser than Gilgamesh and therefore removing mankind's immortality. The snake is advantageous. Though it deprives Gilgamesh of his youth, it restores Gilgamesh's sanity. Gilgamesh now returns with the gift of wisdom. He now concentrates on what is in front of him and does not take life for granted; without the serpent, he would still be the arrogant monarch he was and would not have gained this knowledge.

From a theological standpoint, the serpent was present in The Bible's story of Adam and Eve. The serpent was an embodiment of the devil because God had rigidly warned Adam and Eve not to eat from a specific tree in the Garden of Eden, but Eve was tricked and isolated by a serpent, which then leads her to believe that God had a hidden motive because the serpent possessed information about the forbidden tree that Adam and Eve lacked (Gen. 3. 1-7). This knowledge was utilized to deceive Eve into eating from the tree. God exiles them from Paradise as a result of their immoral behavior. They were no longer immortal as punishment and had to endure a lifetime of hard labor culminating in death.

3.4.4. The Cedar Forest

Another symbolism brought up in the story is the cedar forest, which is considered one of the largest forests in history; the trees are coniferous in essence and develop to a shape similar to a pyramid; the tree is also believed to have been used in the production of softwoods, produce cones, and have fragrant, and are an emblem for many cultures. Cedar trees are cited in both mythologies and theology (the Bible) because it represents immortality, protection, strength, hope, and many other things. In short, the cedar was a symbol of everything tough, fertile, and bountiful in ancient times. Its wood was highly valued because of its strength, color, and aroma.

In myth, it was the home of the gods, “divine, shady woodland fought over by demi-gods and mankind.” (Wikipedia). It is believed that Mesopotamian Gods guarded the cedars, giving rise to another name for the trees; it is guarded by the demigod Humbaba against the needs of mankind. ‘On the Mountain the cedars uplift their abundance. Their shadow is beautiful, is all delight. Thistles hide under them, and the dark prick-thorn, sweet-smelling flowers hide under the cedars ... in all directions, ten thousand miles stretches that forest. (Tablets 4–6) of the Epic of Gilgamesh describes the Cedar Forest. In order to establish fame Gilgamesh and Enkidu entered the forest to slay the giant guardian, they were blown away by the magnificent tall cedar trees and they noticed the guardian's broad trail through the forest and up the mountain.

The cedar tree was planted by God, according to biblical theology, and it was described as robust and sturdy, graceful and lovely (Psalm 80:10, Ezekiel 17:23), high and tall, fragrant, and spreading widely (Psalm 80:10-11). The eagle builds its nest and perches in the cedar trees' high branches. It is thought to be the first tree to provide most of the raw materials from its parts, such as roots, bark, wood, and branches. For example, Gilgamesh utilized the tree to construct a raft to convey the guardian head and himself, as well as Enkidu.

“They tied together a raft...

Enkidu steered it...

While Gilgamesh held the head of Humbaba” (Tablet V)

Overall, the cedar tree appears in the first epic written by man, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and in the Old Testament, the 'real cedar' is mentioned multiple times, symbolizing immortality, protection, and strength, forming a link between theology and mythology.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, The Epic of Gilgamesh is an ancient Mesopotamian epic poem and it is regarded as epic because it is a long narrative poem with heroic subject matter. It originated as a collection of Sumerian legends and poetry in cuneiform, which were later used as source material for an Akkadian epic. In fact, this story was written down by a group of people living in ancient Mesopotamia. The Gilgamesh myth teaches us a lot about Sumerian culture and religion. First, Mesopotamian cultures are considered civilizations because their inhabitants established settlements, grew their own food, tamed animals. Mesopotamian religion refers to the religious beliefs and practices of ancient Mesopotamia's civilizations, which were polytheistic, with adherents worshipping numerous major gods. This epic is remarkable and important in the study of literature. It affected existing and present works of literature, such as the description of Hercules' adventures; The Epic of Gilgamesh also demonstrates insignificantly how the Mesopotamians dealt with authority as a civilization. Also, it provides a depiction of the connection between man and the gods.

The most important point, aspects of a variety of symbolisms are offered to the reader, demonstrating the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology. First, in Mesopotamian mythology and theology, dreams were always regarded to be extremely important for divination and techniques of communication. Second, the huge Cedar trees are featured in both mythology and theology because it signifies immortality,

protection, and strength, which let the reader perceive the cedar as a symbol of everything tough, fertile, and bountiful in ancient times. Another important symbol, both negative and good, was the serpent, which represented evil, immortality, wisdom, and sin, all of which interrelate both mythology and theology. In the epic of Gilgamesh these symbols played a vital role as a conduit between these two disciplines.

General conclusion

A thorough examination of symbolism within the story was conducted as part of this endeavor in order to discover the interrelationship between this symbolism and the disciplines of mythology and theology in the Gilgamesh epic., in particular, a demonstration of their involvement in elevating literature and making the events within the plot can be seen at a different scale with evidence from the story to back it up. This symbol has led to the discovery of a probable relationship between the disciplines of mythology and theology.

Based on the analysis, the dissertation was separated into three chapters; each one discussed a different topic. Theology is a broad field that may be subdivided and classified in more particular words and categories; therefore, it was the first element tackled in this dissertation, with promising results in providing a clear understanding of this field and its relationship to the world of literature.

Knowledge is essential for primitive people to tell myths and become acquainted with the world. Gilgamesh, the story's main protagonist, was a mythological hero-king of Uruk who embarked on a series of perilous quests and adventures to discover the secret of immortality after the death of his buddy. All of this would be impossible to comprehend without mythology; hence, a suitable description of the field mythology is offered, along with a clear explanation of its types, function, and relevance, as well as its relationship with literature.

The conclusion of this dissertation resolved the overall result of the main dissertation issue by providing clear explanation with examples from the plot of the epic, each provided symbol helped me to understand and appreciate the hidden interrelationship

between the previous fields, but a limitation was created due to a lack of resources and an unfinished story but it did not affect the progress of the dissertation.

Works cited

“Ancient Dream Interpretation.” The Lexham Bible Dictionary

“Dreams.” Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (p. 442).

“English Standard Version Bible”. (2001)

“New King James Version” Psalm 80:17

“Practical Theology – What is it?” by <https://www.compellingtruth.org/>

“The Epic of Gilgamesh: Values, & Serpents vs. Bible” Retrieved from
<https://phdessay.com/the-epic-of-gilgamesh-values-serpents-vs-bible/> (2018).

“The Fable, Folktale, Myth, Legend: Differences and Examples.” retrieved from
study.com/academy/lesson/the-fable-folktale-myth-legend-differences-and-examples.html
(2013).

“What is practical theology” retrieved from www.gotquestions.org/practical-theology.html

Anderson, Poul “Meaning, Origin and Functions of Myth: A Brief Survey by -The Future of
Mythology”.

Ansky, S. & Roskies, D. “The Harps that Once” (1992)

Badham, Paul ‘What Is Theology’.

Bahr, Don. “What Happened to Mythology?” *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1993, pp. 44–
49. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409184>. Accessed 21 Jun. 2022.

Baumbach, Sibylle “The Fascination of Mythopoetic Space and William --Drummond’s ‘The
Statue of Medusa’”, 2009

Brown, Arthur, “A. Storytelling, the Meaning of Life, and the Epic of Gilgamesh”. (1996).

Campbell Joseph "Historical atlas of world mythology, the way of the animal powers" Vol. 1 (1987)

Carson, D.A "Systematic Theology and biblical Theology" 2009

-Dalley, Stephanie, Myths from Mesopotamia, Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others, Oxford University Press, Oxford, (1989).

Gamila, Donia "How Mythology Shapes Modern World Literature: The Echoes of Mythology" (2019).

George B "WHAT IS BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, AND WHAT IS ITS METHOD?" pp. 5-8 (1893).

George, A., Sandars, N. K., & Pasco, R. "The epic of Gilgamesh" (2003).

George, Andrew "The Epic of Gilgamesh: the Babylonian Epic Poem and Other texts in Akkadian and Sumerian. Penguin Classics (2003).

Heidel, Alexander ,The Gilgamesh epic and Old Testament parallels (1946)

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/theology>

J. Simpson & S. Roud, "Dictionary of English Folklore", Oxford, p.254 (2000)

Joshua J. Mark "Mythology"

Kearns, McNelly "Religion, Literature, and Theology: Potential and problems"

KÖSTENBERGER, ANDREAS J. "Biblical theology".

Kovacs, Maureen, Gallery & Carnahan, "Wolf. The Epic of Gilgamesh, 1998". (2009) from <<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab1.htm>>

Kramer, Noah, "Samuel Reflections on the Mesopotamian Flood " Expedition Magazine 9.4 (1967)

Kramer, S. N. "History Begins at Sumer". University of Pennsylvania Press, (1988).

Losada ,José Manuel "Myth and Origins: Men Want to Know" (2015)

Mark, J. J. "Mythology. *World History Encyclopedia*". Retrieved from <https://www.worldhistory.org/mythology/>.com. (2018).

Müller, Max "Natural Religion", p. 33, (1889).

Patton, Michael 'What is Theology?', (August 22nd 2005).

Pillay, Jerry and Dreyer, Wim A. "Historical Theology: Content, methodology and relevance"

Piper, Otto A. "Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology", Vol. 25, No. 2 (1957).

Pope, Alexder "THEOLOGY and English Literature" (2017).

Prasanna "Theology Essay | Theology Definition, A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the Study of Theology December" (p4, 2021).

Prickett, Stephen "Narrative, Theology and literature".

Shin-eqi-unninni. "Gilgamesh". The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Vol. A: Beginnings.

The Biblical World *Vol.* 1, No. 1 pp. 5-8 (4 pages) (1893).

The Epic of Gilgamesh: "A New Translation, Barnes and Noble, New York" (1999)

Weather, Winston "Mythology in modern literature" (2016).

Wicazo Sa Review, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 44–49. (1993).

www.gotquestions.org/systematic-theology

ملخص

ملحمة غلغامش عبارة عن مجموعة من أساطير بلاد ما بين النهرين عن غلغامش، البطل الأسطوري لملك أوروك، ورفيقه إنكيديو، وهما يشرعان في عدد من المهمات والمغامرات الصعبة والخطيرة، وفي النهاية يقود مصير غلغامش لبحث عن سر الخلود بعد وفاة صديقه. الفائدة من هذه الدراسة هو إجراء فحص شامل للرموز داخل القصة لاكتشاف العلاقة المتبادلة بين هذه الرموز وتخصصات علم الأساطير واللاهوت، مع التركيز على الدلالات الرمزية للخطاب الديني. لقد تم تحليل هذه التحفة الفنية من منظور رمزي ولاهوتي لاستنباط موضوعاتها وزخارفها.

كلمات مفتاحية: علم الأساطير، اللاهوت، الحديث، الرموز، التاريخ، ملحمة غلغامش.