**Part 1**

**Transformation**

1. Tablet II, P94-P111 (The harlot opened her mouth…to do battle with lions) (12 lines)
2. Tablet XI, 259-270 (Let the robes show…[but stay fresh] and new) (12 lines)

Both passages describe a renewal of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. In the first passage, Shamhat guides Enkidu to be more human-like after taking him to the Uruk. In Uruk he ate bread, drank ale and became joyful as his heart grew merry (Tablet II, P100-P102). Then with the help of a barber, he was anointed with well-scented oils and became a man (Tablet II, P108-P109). Thus, he became a human-like man who is ready to battle like a warrior. Similar to Enkidu’s anointing with oils, in the second passage, Gilgamesh washes clean in the washtub where Ur-shanabi led him (Tablet XI, 262-263). He also wears a new kerchief for his head and his new and fresh royal robes (Tablet XI, 266-267). Such changing of clothes is also mentioned in the first passage with Enkidu putting on his garment (Tablet II, P110). Thus, both passages are similar in terms of mentioning the characters’ bathing, getting clean, and changing their clothes. Therefore, both passages describe the transition from the old self to the new self. However, while Enkidu becoming a warrior is directly mentioned in the first passage with the quote: “He put on a garment, became like a warrior” (Tablet II, P110), such direct mention does not appear in Gilgamesh’s case.

Considering the context of the whole text, symbolism is often used when describing places and events. In this occurrence, bathing, cleaning, and putting on new, clean clothes are a symbol of transformation. Such transformations are usually tied with maturity, and finding the correct path. In the first passage, Enkidu eats bread, drinks ale, and then he is anointed with oil, turning into a man (Tablet I, P100-P109). He was living in the wilderness like an animal with gazelles at the beginning, then with Shamhat’s guidance, he transformed into a human in Uruk. In other words, at first, he was eating grasses and drinking water like an animal, but in Uruk, he started to eat bread and drink ale like a human. In addition, he is also anointed with oil which is a form of bathing. In the second passage, Gilgamesh bathes in the washtub, wears clean royal robes, and he goes back to Uruk to serve his duty as a king instead of searching for immortality. Abandoning his people, Gilgamesh was searching for ways to become immortal. However, after he realized that all of his labors are redundant, he decided to stay as the king of his people with the advice of Uta-napishti. Gilgamesh’s transformation into being a king again from a wanderer searching for immortality is explained through the symbolism of bathing, cleaning, and putting on new clothes. Enkidu’s transformation into a human living in Uruk from an animal living in the wilderness is also explained similarly to Gilgamesh’s transformation. Bathing means getting rid of the old dirt piled on the body and is a symbol for leaving behind the past thoughts and moving on to a fresh start. Similarly, putting on new clothes means taking off the old clothes which is a symbol for leaving past purposes behind, and creating newer ones. In these passages, Enkidu leaves the wilderness behind and embraces Uruk where his peer Gilgamesh lives. Similarly, Gilgamesh gives up his past purpose of searching for immortality and decides to become the king of his people again. Therefore, as the story progresses, Enkidu and Gilgamesh transform into more mature, and wise in terms of knowing what they want to do. Thus, the bigger idea and the keyword describing both passages is transformation.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Tablet I, 203-214 (He came back...he should seek a friend) (12 lines)
2. Tablet X, 270-281 (“Did they ever,”...the gods [of the night]) (12 lines)

Both passages help the characters (Gilgamesh and Enkidu) recall their duty in the story. In the first passage, Shamhat guides Enkidu about his responsibilities while in the second passage it is Uta-Napishti who gives advice to Gilgamesh. Since Enkidu was born in the wilderness, he didn’t know his responsibilities and the beauties of life he’s been missing. Afterward, Shamhat told Enkidu about Gilgamesh the king of Uruk, and how Gilgamesh was lording over the menfolk. In addition, she also stated that he is just like a god and should not wander the wilderness but rather live in Uruk with his peer, Gilgamesh (Tablet I, 207-210). Similarly, Gilgamesh deviated from his responsibilities to his people in Uruk by searching for immortality. Upon finding Uta-napishti and learning that immortality cannot be obtained, Uta-napishti reminds him of his advantages in life, and that he should be looking after his people in Uruk as a king instead of wasting his time chasing sorrow (Tablet X, 274-281). Uta-Napishti directly tells Gilgamesh that he has no advisor, and lacks counsel with the quote: “Because he has no advisers [to guide him], his affairs lack counsel” (Tablet X, 276-277). Implying that his affairs (such as searching for immortality) are illogical and he should instead focus on his duties. In addition, later on in this tablet, Uta-napishti also directly reminds Gilgamesh of his duty of being a provisioner of the temples, and a king to his people (Tablet X, 288-289). Thus, it further supports the idea that Gilgamesh should not seek immortality but rather fulfill his duties. One of the differences between the passages is that while it is directly mentioned that Enkidu understands his responsibilities, there are no direct signs showing that Gilgamesh also knows his duties as a king. With Shamhat’s guidance, Enkidu's understanding of his responsibilities by instinct is directly mentioned with the quote: “She spoke to him and her word found favour, he knew by instinct, he should seek a friend” (Tablet I, 213-214). Whereas there are no responses from Gilgamesh showing that he knows his duties in the second passage yet is mentioned in the next chapter of the story (Tablet XI) with his transformation to being a king.

These passages both emphasize the importance of one’s duties in life. Throughout the story, characters have fixed duties that they need to fulfill. For instance, Shamash, the sun god, wakes up early in the morning to raise the sun and set it down at night. Like Shamash, other gods also have specific duties they are responsible for. Therefore, characters fulfilling their duties and responsibilities play an important role in the story. Similar to other characters, Gilgamesh and Enkidu are both responsible for their duties. Enkidu is just like a god and is nearly equivalent to Gilgamesh in terms of power, and he was essentially created to be the counterpart to Gilgamesh. Therefore, as Shamhat states, even though he was born into the wilderness and lived with gazelles, he belongs to Uruk where other people like him and his peer, Gilgamesh live (Tablet I, 208-209). By going to Uruk, he will fulfill his duty of meeting with Gilgamesh as his counterpart. Similarly, Gilgamesh is responsible for his people in Uruk as a king. Even though he abandons his people while searching for immortality, he is reminded by Uta-Napishti at the end that his duty is to take care of his people and be a provisioner to the temple of gods, not become an immortal god (Tablet X, 286-289). Thus, the bigger idea is the duties and responsibilities of the characters. The characteristics of Enkidu and Gilgamesh define the duties they must fulfill. Gilgamesh is superior to normal people and has every advantage to be a king. Enkidu is the counterpart to Gilgamesh and looks like a god so that he should be living with his peer Gilgamesh in Uruk where he belongs instead of the wilderness.

**The Attribute of Gods: Wisdom**

1. Tablet I, 1-10 (He who saw the deep...on a table of stone.) (10 lines)
2. Tablet X, 78-89 (Said the tavern-keeper...let him see your face!) (12 lines)

Both passages describe the features and the types of wisdom. In the first passage, the wisdom of Gilgamesh, and in the second passage, the wisdom of Shiduri is mainly described. Gilgamesh was wise because he knew the proper ways, he saw what was considered to be secret, and he knew everything (Tablet I, 4-7). Therefore, in the first passage, the type of wisdom is connected with knowing everything, even the secrets. Similar to the first passage, she knew secrets that others didn’t know. She told that nobody ever crossed the ocean except for Shamash, thus only Shamash could know the dangers and the end of the ocean (Tablet X, 79-82). However, Shiduri also knew the dangers of crossing the ocean and told Gilgamesh that if he wanted to cross the ocean anyways, he should seek help from Ur-shanabi the ferryman (Tablet X, 87-88). Therefore, in the second passage, Shiduri’s wisdom was described through her knowing secrets nobody else but Shamash seemed to know. Thus, both passages have a common definition of wisdom as knowing secrets. In addition, considering chapter three outside the tablets, Shiduri also gives advice to Gilgamesh on how to live a life with quotes such as: “Make merry each day, dance and play day and night” (George 2020, 194) which usually corresponds to wisdom in wisdom literature. Therefore, Shiduri’s wisdom is not only bound to her knowing secrets, but also her giving advice on how to live. In addition, this type of wisdom is also mentioned with Uta-napishti when he was giving advice to Gilgamesh in the later tablets. Therefore, both passages describe wisdom with different definitions. While knowing secrets as a form of wisdom is common among the texts, passages are different from each other in terms of other definitions of wisdom.

Considering the context of the whole text, there are different types of wisdom used to describe different characters. Furthermore, there are specific characteristics that are tied to gods such as unsleeping, being immortal, and living separately from humans. Wisdom is one of these features that is usually connected with gods in the story. In the first passage, Gilgamesh’s wisdom is described with him knowing the proper ways, the secrets, and the sum of everything. In the second passage, Shiduri’s wisdom is described with her knowing the secrets and giving advice on how to live. Thus, since Shiduri and Gilgamesh have wisdom, the characteristic of a god, both passages further support the idea of Gilgamesh and Shiduri being superior to normal humans, like gods. In the text, Gilgamesh’s superiority is often emphasized. His features such as being strong, tall, fearless, and like a wild bull are proof that he is superior to normal humans and the reasons why he is the king of Uruk. Thus, since Gilgamesh’s wisdom is similar to the Shiduri’s wisdom and Shiduri is considered to be a goddess, Gilgamesh being god-like due to his features are emphasized again with these passages. Therefore, these passages, when compared, contribute to the emphasis of how god-like Gilgamesh is and have features no human can achieve.

**Part 2**

**Gilgamesh’s Visit to Enkidu and his Death**

A few days ago, there was a recent discovery of a tablet that gives a better understanding of the story of Gilgamesh. The discovered tablet is considered to be the last tablet that completes the Tablet XI. Before the discovery of this tablet, the story of Gilgamesh was thought to have ended when Gilgamesh stopped seeking eternal life and returned to being a king. He gave up his redundant purposes, accepted that he is mortal, and instead believed his immortality would come with the eternal city he built: Uruk. The story of Gilgamesh ended abruptly without describing his state after he returned to being a king. This newly discovered tablet explains what Gilgamesh did after returning to Uruk, his dreams, and finally his death. The poem of this tablet starts with describing Gilgamesh’s state. He is still afraid of death but accepts that he cannot gain immortality. Consequently, he feels weaker due to him failing to find eternal life. He has nightmares filled with scenes of a maggot eating Enkidu’s body starting from his head. Despite him not being able to stop his death, he still refuses to be eaten by a maggot. Thus, he tries to find other ways to prevent what happened to Enkidu from happening to him. In the story, it is often believed that what happens in the Netherworld is a reflection of what happens in the real world. For instance, the way people die is also carried to the Netherworld: A person who fell from a roof still has broken bones, a man struck by the Storm God twitches like an ox in the Netherworld as a reflection of maggots consuming him in the real world -as also mentioned in chapter two- (George 2020, 143). In addition, with this newly discovered tablet, Gilgamesh asks Ereshkigal, the queen of the Netherworld if such reflection works both ways. Ereshkigal responds to him with: “Erehkigal said to him, to Gilgamesh: ‘One who has shown desirable affairs while still alive, will have rest in the Netherworld, and his death will be his most wanted’”. With this information, Gilgamesh plans to contact Enkidu and ask him about Netherworld. He asks Ereshkigal to bring him to the Netherworld to see Enkidu and Ereshkigal agrees to let Gilgamesh meet with his friend for the last time. Gilgamesh sees his friend again, hugs and kisses him, then they talk about the Netherworld. Gilgamesh learns that the more sons a man has, the more rest he will get in the Netherworld -as also seen in the chapter two- (George 2020, 142). In addition, Enkidu also tells him about his dream where gods get together and decide on Enkidu’s doom and reminds Gilgamesh to get along well with gods. After Gilgamesh returns to Uruk after talking with Enkidu, he starts doing only the desirable affairs to seem appealing to gods. He remembers Enkidu’s dream and starts to be a merciful king from now on. He is afraid of gods being angry with him which might result in a painful death similar to Enkidu’s death. Thus, considering that women in Uruk would complain to gods, Gilgamesh starts letting go of boys and girls to their fathers and mothers. He becomes a desirable king and has a countless number of sons with different women that loved him. Therefore, due to his desirable actions, he gets rewarded with rest in the Netherworld, and he dies as he wished. At the end of this tablet, Gilgamesh’s death is described. It was mentioned that he dies in combat after defeating thousands of enemy soldiers. His god-like body is full of wounds and battle scars, and even though he defeats the enemy, he dies due to excessive blood loss. He leaves behind a glorious city he built, a countless number of sons, and a heroic legacy consisting of hundreds of victories. His people commemorate him for his strength, courage, and wisdom. Unlike Enkidu, Gilgamesh falls in combat and makes his name. Restful he is in the Netherworld, he does not get eaten by maggots in the real world. Even though he could not achieve eternal life, he finds peace at the end, living with his beloved friend Enkidu in the Netherworld. His people build a memorial in his memory and mourn for him every day. Thus, with his accomplishments in the real world, he becomes the most restful man in the Netherworld.

The concept of death is constantly emphasized in the story. Whether a man is a god-like human or not, all humans are obliged to die at some point. Being immortal is a feature of gods. When Gilgamesh was given the task of staying awake for seven days by Uta-napishti, he realized that he cannot even go seven days without sleeping, so he would also not be able to beat death (Tablet XI, 235-242). Thus, Gilgamesh accepts his mortality, returns to Uruk as a king with the advice of Uta-napishti. With the discovery of the new tablet, Gilgamesh’s state is further explained. Before he saw his friend Enkidu being eaten by maggots, he was supporting that one should not be afraid of his death but be afraid of not living a quality life. Thus, the wanderings of Gilgamesh eventually led him to his first original state while also maturing him. He transformed into a better version of him multiple times with the bathing symbolism. His last transformation which continued with his death was mentioned in the newly discovered tablet. He became a caring king and did every desirable affair to seem appealing to gods. Therefore, this tablet provides an ending to Gilgamesh’s travails and is the completion of the story of Gilgamesh. However, whether the story ends well or not depends on the reader's interpretation. He finally finds peace, restful he is in the Netherworld, and dies as he wanted. His nightmare of maggots eating him did not come true. In addition, he is now with his friend Enkidu, continuing to have a peaceful life in the Netherworld since he has many sons, and has done many desirable affairs. Thus, the ending might be interpreted as a good ending in terms of Gilgamesh getting rid of his fears, and living a restful life with his friend. However, from a different perspective, he transforms into a merciful king not because he wanted to, but because he was afraid of being eaten by a maggot, and gods deciding his death. He fulfills his duties and performs desirable actions to seem appealing to gods. Thus, he does not have any control over his behaviors anymore, he must be a good king that nobody complains to not make gods angry. Therefore, the last transformation of Gilgamesh also corresponds to him not only losing his friend Enkidu but also himself in terms of his personality even though he is still alive. Since he prioritizes doing only desirable affairs than old Gilgamesh’s affairs such as slaying Bull of Heaven and Humbaba, he is now controlled by his fear of death and the gods. Thus, even though he is at rest and accomplished everything he wanted in the end, he is not the same fearless and untameable wild bull Gilgamesh. Therefore, the ending might also be interpreted as a bad ending since Gilgamesh loses his original identity at the end. Finally, this latest tablet relates to the story with concepts such as death, transformation, and responsibilities. It is a completion of the story including the last transformation, and death. Thus, with this discovery, the ending of the story of Gilgamesh is revealed.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. *The Epic of Gilgamesh,* 2nd ed. Translated by Andrew George. Penguin Books, 2020.