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Gilgamesh 1-5 Reflection

“Nature will take its course, and then the animals who knew him in the wilderness will be bewildered, and will leave” (Stephen 53)

One thing that I had a hard time understanding was how Enkidu became civilized by making love to Shamhat. I don't believe that his giving into his natural urges would be representative of a civilized society. I believe that self-control is more indicative of someone who has become civilized. Another thing I do not understand is how Enkidu learned how to communicate with people even though he has lived in the wilderness for his entire life. On the other hand, I could see that sex would bring him closer to Shamhat, emotionally and intellectually. Enkidu also loses his strength after his time with Shamhat. I believe that this could be interpreted as Enkidu trading his wild strength and speed for wisdom. Throughout these first five tablets, I could tell that sex held a significant amount of meaning for the people of this era. Similarly, many people in contemporary society believe that sex has more substance than just physical.

Another theme that I noticed in the first two tablets was the stark contrast between man and nature. Enkidu's wild nature is the antithesis of Gilgamesh's civilized nature. I have a hard time understanding why Enkidu would become the voice of reason after he had been portrayed as someone who had only recently become “human.” In addition, the story depicts the natural world as dangerous through the character Humbaba and the fact that in order for Enkidu to truly

become good and oppose Gilgamesh's tyrannical reign, he must remove himself from his natural home and mindset to become civilized.