

Ms. Lewis

May 1, 2012 **The****The Epic of Gilgamesh—Mortality Quotations**

The MAIN theme in The Epic of Gilgamesh is mortality-- how Gilgamesh himself copes with his own mortality changes as the epic progresses. Remember that the term **mortality** refers to the ability to die, and more importantly, the thought process that goes along with accepting that you will one day die.

Your assignment is to track his changing views of morality. For each of the following sections of the story, 1) write down (and note the page number of) a quote that represents Gilgamesh's view of his own mortality at that moment and 2) explain for EACH quote what that quote is saying about Gilgamesh's view of his own mortality at that moment:

Point in the story	Quotation from text	Pg #	What is Gilgamesh's attitude towards MORTALITY at this point in the story
before fighting Humbaba	"We are not gods, we cannot ascend to heaven. No, we are mortal men. Only the gods live forever. <i>Our days are few in number, and whatever we achieve is a puff of wind. Why be afraid then, since sooner or later death must come?</i> "	93	
right after Enkidu's death OR before meeting Utnapishtim (pick one, similar attitude in both situations)			

Point in the story	Direct quotation from text	Pg #	What is Gilgamesh's attitude towards MORTALITY at this point in the story
at the very end when he has returned to Uruk and is speaking to Urshanabi	"This is the wall of Uruk, which no city on earth can equal. See how its ramparts gleam like copper in the sun.... approach the Eanna Temple, sacred to Ishtar, a temple no king has equaled in size or beauty, walk on the wall of Uruk, follow its course around the city, inspect its mighty foundations, examine its brickwork, how masterfully it is built, observe the land it encloses..."	198-9	

Others' Advice to Gilgamesh about the Nature of Mortality

Shiduri's advice		168-9	
Utnapishtim's advice	"But man's life is short, at any moment it can be snapped...And yet we build houses, make contracts, brothers divide their inheritance, conflicts occur—as though this human life lasted forever. The river rises, flows over its banks and carries us all away..."	178	

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