



Dachil Sado

Myth of Gilgamesh seeking Europa

Edited by Mary Okonkwo

After Gilgamesh, the King of Uruk, lost the plant of immortality, he heard about the legend of Europa. He was told stories and descriptions of her looks. The stories came to his imagination and dreams for a long time; Gilgamesh recognized that the real immortality was to have his dream of life. He dreamed of the beauty which no god could describe; he wanted to start his journey to meet the most beautiful woman in the universe, Europa. He wanted to risk his divine power and face death to get her.

Gilgamesh started his search walking through Anatolia toward the forest of Bulgaria. In the forest, Gilgamesh had to face the refugee hunter.¹ He had to creep through the forest and withstand the icy wind. Gilgamesh was climbing the mountains while his feet were immersed in the mud. The space was covered by the voices of the monsters trying to stop him getting his precious dream.

► Fig. 1

At the end of the last valley of the Bulgarian mountains, a monster with double heads² surprised Gilgamesh and broke through the borders to leave a deadly sting on his neck, thus sending him back to the starting point in Anatolia.

“The vision that I saw was wholly awesome! / The heavens shrieked, the earth boomed! / Though daylight was dawning, darkness came. / Lightning flashed, a flame shot up. / The clouds swelled, it rained death! / Then the glow vanished; the fire went out.

And all that had fallen was turned to ashes”³, said Gilgamesh to his Goddess mother Ninsun. With a waterfall of tears falling from his eyes, he begged her and



Fig. 1 Drawing by Dachil Sado, no title, 29.5 cm × 20.9 cm | Dachil Sado



Fig. 2 Mohammed sitting on a rock at Sahara
| Hiba Serwan

asked her help to show him the way to Europa.

“Ride the grey boat, traverse Sahara where the sand storms, cross the sea of death, reach the gate of Lampedusa”, said Ninsun.

Gilgamesh rode his cart, which was driven by divine power, and headed toward Lampedusa. He dove through the sandstorms like a fish swimming in sweet water, he flew over the sea of death, and passed through the Lampedusa underworld which was full of bones and bodies of the ones who tried to pass before him. ▶ Fig. 2

At the rise of the sun, Gilgamesh arrived at the border of the Bavaria Empire. At the border gate appeared Alkahina, the guardian of the Empire who was under the curse of an evil god.

Al-ka-hina was sitting behind her musical instrument, waiting to face Gilgamesh and control his divine power with her symphony curse. Gilgamesh swirled up like a tornado and chirped like a nightingale; he sent a wave of emotions and released her from the insensitive curse⁴ and said:

“In my city man dies; oppressed is my heart. / Man perishes; / Heavy is my heart ... / Man, the tallest, cannot stretch to heaven; / Man, the widest, cannot cover the earth.”⁵ / The queen stood on her legs and contained the quest of Gilgamesh into a flask and answered: / “You, the King of Uruk, brave as a lion. / You, the seeker of immortality, found the dream. / You, the one faced difficulties, reached Europa.”

Features of comfort appeared on the face of Gilgamesh; he passed into Bavaria with feelings of liberation from fighting the monsters. The Sumerian King of Uruk felt the dissolution of the restrictions that forced him to confront all the difficulties that he had gone through.

Gilgamesh walked toward the light of Europa and raised his hand to touch her skin, when suddenly Yousif⁶ woke up in his bed. He opened his eyes to see the ceiling of Room 209.

“Room of 16 square meters, lit by two glowing and radiant lights, narrow passage between the two beds blocked with a bone table, surrounded by lockers. Behind my head during sleeping there is the shelf of a collection of electricity switches in red and white with a small TV on it and looks like the room of intensive care.”⁷

Yousif felt sorry and drew a smile on his face, wondering about how the world changed that the descendant of Babylon civilization builders is now seeking asylum. Yousif closed his eyes in the abandoned room to fly back to his dream. “I believe in everything until it’s disproved. So I believe in fairies, the myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it’s in your mind. Who’s to say that dreams and nightmares aren’t as real as the here and now?”⁸ ▶ Fig. 3



Fig. 3 Yousif wears an amulet of protection around his neck: the five-legged Lamassu incorporates the swiftness of the eagle with the strength of the lion. The divine hybrid-being’s body originates from a whale, the goddess strides with the legs of a Taurus, and her head is human. The Assyrian considers himself as a proud descendant of Babylonian civilization.⁹ | barbara caveng

What it means to be a refugee!

A refugee is a person who had to flee his home for different reasons. A refugee is a person who is covered by a tent or put on a bed. A refugee is a person who has to be part of a group called refugees. A refugee is someone who has to follow every person in the world and dream about being the last one and just being at least a part of the societal range.¹⁰ A refugee is the one whose voice cannot rise more than asking for bread. A refugee is at a point when your humanity is quietly erased. When a person loses his identity by being called a refugee, this is one of the hardest points a human being can stand at.

In March 1992, in Shingal, Iraq, I was born exactly one year after the Gulf War stopped. I grew up as a normal child with a dream of being a scientist and an inventor. Albert Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci became my idols when I was ten years old. I heard a lot of stories and songs about what we Ezidi people had suf-

fered through 72 genocides. It was told that the attacks were mainly by people who were close to us or from surrounding areas. The Shingal community was not isolating any of the people in its city; people from different beliefs and unbelievers were living together. In August 2007, there was an attack on my city by a multiple car bombing in Al-Adnaniah and Al-Qahtaniyah; some 500 Yazidis were killed and 1,500 wounded. It was the fourth deadliest terrorist strike in the world. I was a lecturer in computer courses for young and illiterate people in my city. In August 2009, at least 20 people were killed and 30 wounded in a double suicide bombing, three meters away from our course place.

I didn't give up studying and working. I worked at my family's factory as an electrician, and also I worked as a security specialist policeman in the Domiz Camp (in Iraqi-Kurdistan) for Syrian people who had to flee. Shortly after I had opened a shisha bar in June 2014, the "Islamic State" attacked our city. The Iraqi and Kurdish forces left the city in August 2014 causing genocide. The UN declared that more than 5,000 Yazidis were killed, and between 5,000 and 7,000 Yazidi women were abducted. I had to flee through Syria to survive; my uncle and my cousin were beheaded and two friends were killed by the "Islamic State". Even if we are, as Yazidis, hopeful and peaceful in our beliefs—this attack didn't leave any more hope for us to stay in a part of the world where we had been through 73 genocides. "Hope is a waking dream" (Aristotle).

I gave up the life of having no simple human rights neither in the Iraqi nor Kurdish parts. I chose to continue my trip to Germany. I chose Germany to continue my life as a normal human being.

On the 17th of January 2015, I arrived in Berlin. After one month, I met Barbara Caveng¹¹, the initiator of KUNSTASYL¹², a participatory art project. This project gave me a chance to build up myself again; I found several ways to express myself through art. I studied one semester of Civil Engineering at Technical University of Berlin. I was the best of 250 students for Mathematics, chemistry and physics in my high school. After having some experiences in visual art and feeling the power of art, I decided to study art, and I was accepted in the preparation course at Kunsthochschule Weißensee in Berlin. My first piece of art is a person with a finger print on his back, and it is expressing every person in the situation of Hameed.

I shared, for several months, a room in a building for asylum seekers with Hameed and another person from Pakistan. When I was in Iraq, other people and I thought that people who were from Afghanistan were always bad; I was even afraid to tell Hameed my real name.

Hameed is one of the few people I know, with the most innocent dreams. He is a person who doesn't want more than having a job and a wife; he just wants to live a life without being close to conflicts and war. After becoming friends with Hameed and getting to know him, I felt sorry for my earlier way of thinking. I was embarrassed to have had the idea of judging some people without knowing anything about them.



Fig. 4 Hameed in his room | Till Rimmelé

Hameed started school at the age of seven and finished high school, but didn't apply for university because of economical problems. Directly after stopping his studies, he started working to support his family. Hameed is the oldest of his two brothers and three sisters; his father was a farmer, before being kidnapped in November 2013 by an unknown group; his mother is living together with his brothers and sisters. His family lives unstably between Kabul and Kunduz, due to the threats they get because of Hameed's job as a translator for the USA Army. His sisters cannot go to school because of the danger from groups killing women who go to school.

Hameed worked two and half years as an assistant at a human resources office in Afghanistan. One time he was the employee of the month, and he was proud of this and took a photo with his colleagues at the company. He put his photo in his house in the village. One visitor saw Hameed's photo and informed a group of Taliban fighters about it. Hameed hurt his right knee when he had to jump from the first floor and flee after an attack from this group. As most mothers of people who had to flee, Hameed's mother asked him not to come back to the country because of being panicked about losing her oldest son.

Hameed started his travel to Europe, but he got arrested on the Bulgarian borders, and (as he claims) was hit by the Bulgarian border police on his injured knee. Hameed said that the police forced him to give fingerprints and apply for asylum in Sofia, Bulgaria. Hameed did not want to stay in Bulgaria, so he continued his way until he stopped in Berlin. Hameed experienced one and half years lack of sleep and discomfort because of being put through the process of the Dublin Regulation¹³ and facing the daily possibility of being deported to

Selma Muraps'
1995 - 05 - 16
Albania (Leukës) - shishtavec.

I dont know how long will
I live with this mood, ...
like to day was a really bad
day for me ... you can start with
a smile in the morning but
that smile can go down by
hearing things like some one
is trying very hard to make there
life better but it goes wrong
like some things are really meant
for you cos your life in your own
place can not go right so
you see search an other place
Dream: "I want to break
the wall to be myself"

Fig.5 Vita Nova, writing by Selma in my notebook | Dachil Sado

Bulgaria. After one and half years of applying for asylum, Hameed got a letter that his case has been reopened. ▶ Fig. 4

Not knowing which decision will be taken is the point of being put in a circle of depression for everyone who had to flee. The incapability of living in a normal way and being helpless is the exact definition of pain.

“Everything was shaking, even the lights; it looked like everything is going to fall down. It was like an earthquake every single second.” Those words were the expression of Selma Murati¹⁴ describing the place where she lived with her family, the first week of being in Berlin. Selma is an attractive young woman who comes from Kukes, Albania. When Selma was a child she went to the United Kingdom with her family, on a plastic boat; due to her fear of water, they put a plastic bag on her head so she would not see the sea. One morning, Selma and her family were awoken and picked up by the police and deported to Albania, after five years of being in Leeds, England. The travel of the Murati family started again in 2015, and they arrived in Germany in the same year.

Selma clarified that in Albania politicians are not letting the Albanian people live and have their freedom, especially women. She said that in Albania a main duty for women is to get married and have kids. “I am in Europe; I am in Germany, but still no freedom, I want to break the wall and be myself!” Selma said those words, shouting as a freedom fighter. The emotions were torn inside her heart as the earth crumbled beneath her feet; she just wanted to stay and have a new life, and then she said that Albania is not Europe—it’s just the door beside.

“Each human has the right to live wherever, whenever and however he wants.”¹⁵

Selma and her family got what is called “white paper” (Deportation Letter). Asylum seekers coming from the Balkans are the ones who came from so called safe countries, the decision is taken and their asylum case is rejected and closed.¹⁶ ▶ Fig. 5

Gilgamesh rested / in blessed sleep, the best of friends at the worst of times. / But by the moon’s half way course, he rose / and then began to speak: / “Brother, if you made no noise, what sound woke me? / If you didn’t jostle me, what shook my body? / There was no god nearby, so why am I so stunned? / Brother, I’ve had a third vision in sleep / and I am deeply frightened to recall it all. / Sky screamed. And Mother Earth moaned. / Sun went out of light and blackest night / enveloped the heavens. / Then came flashes of lightning, source of fire. / Storm clouds raced nearby and swept all life away / from out of the sky above our heads. / Brightness dissolved, light evaporated; / cinders turned to ash. / When we leave the mountain, this is what we will remember.”¹⁷

1 Refugee hunters are vigilante groups of volunteers who patrol Bulgaria’s border with Turkey and hunt people who try to come to Europe. A video

of their work was published on AJ+ an online news and current events channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwJSGy3-PDM> - accessed on

06/08/2016) run by Al Jazeera Media Network (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Media_Network - accessed on 31/05/2016).

I Biographical fates

- 2 The EU-Turkey Agreement dates March 18th, 2016 to close the borders and stop migration.
- 3 Epic of Gilgamesh, http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/serpents_dragons/gilgamesh.htm (accessed on 30/05/2016).
- 4 Al-kahina, the Amazigh queen, was a religious and military leader. She was born in the early 7th century C.E. and was beheaded by Uqba ibn Nafi around the end of the 7th century in modern-day Algeria (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dihya_\(Berber_Queen\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dihya_(Berber_Queen)) - accessed on 30/05/2016). Al-kahina and the text here are representing the decision of asylum cases and the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees).
- 5 Epic of Gilgamesh, see note 3.
- 6 Yousif left Iraq in 2002; he lived and worked in Greece for twelve years. The economical crisis destroyed his living existence, so he fled again and since 2015 has lived in Germany.
- 7 Quote from me about Room 102 in a home for asylum seekers in Berlin-Spandau. I lived in this room for about five months.
- 8 John Lennon, http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/19968.John_Lennon (accessed on 31/05/2016).
- 9 <http://kunstasyl.net/en/2-og/209> (accessed on 31/05/2016).
- 10 Asylum seekers who arrive in a new country far from their own are being mainly isolated in the new society.
- 11 Visual artist, living in Berlin.
- 12 KUNSTASYL is an initiative of artists, creative minds and asylum seekers (see <http://kunstasyl.net/en/> - accessed on 31/05/2016).
- 13 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin_Regulation (accessed on 31/05/2016)
- 14 Selma is a 21 year old woman living with her parents and two brothers in an unstable situation, searching for asylum. They stayed in Berlin for one year, and then they got the letter of deportation back to Albania from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and their case of asylum is closed since May 2016.
- 15 Aymen Montasser, pianist and architect from Tunisia.
- 16 According to European Asylum Support Office, "... a series of measures has been taken by (EU Member States and Associated Countries) MSACs to reduce both push and pull factors. With regard to pull factors, according to the possibilities provided by their national law to deal with the substantial numbers of claims for international protection that they receive from (Western Balkans) WB nationals, MSACs have, inter alia: used accelerated procedures, prioritised the WB case-load or shortened the duration of the normal asylum procedure (from application to final decision and return); reorganised their processing and resources to deal with peak flows; reduced cash benefits provided during the procedure; and strengthened voluntary or forced return programmes." (<https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/BZ0213708ENC.pdf> (p. 73, No. 5: Conclusion) - accessed on 06/06/2016).
- 17 Epic of Gilgamesh: Column IV, <http://www.piney.com/Gil05.html> (accessed on 31/05/2016).