

# Man and his Ring

Written by Philip Sajat

In the Enuma Elish

Also known as the Gilgamesh epos

Gilgamesh wishes as a human to become a god, to receive eternal life.

Gods can't of course allow that.

But after long insistence they grant him the possibility of becoming a half-god.

(I don't know what the advantage or advantages of that may be, only half of an eternal life?)

But before he can become this half-god he will have to show his powers and his capacities

and he gets 10 tasks. (very similar to the story of Hercules) he performs those tasks well.

(fighting a lion maybe, etc etc)

And then his last proof of power will be that he has to fight the monster Humbaba.

This battle lasts long. (days?) and he at long last wins.

Barely, but he does. (Again a similarity, this time with the story of Jacob fighting an angel)

Now comes the interesting part.

Gilgamesh from his pocket (from somewhere anyway) takes a RING and puts that through the nose of Humbaba to hold him captive.

On a rope through the ring he leads to where-ever he wishes to lead Humbaba to.

Or as it is so eloquently translated from the 5th Tablet: " Like a Captured ox, a nose ring was thrown over Humbaba. Like a captured hero a rope was fastened about him."

Now from here of on I can follow my own fantasy, (after having followed the fantasy of others, who wrote the Gilgamesh epos?)

This ring clearly is a sign of power and as this is (to my knowledge) the first mention of a ring in writing ever (as before the clay tablets nothing has been written by man).

We will have to build on the information we get from this source

So the Ring is a sign of Authority, of Power.

We can imagine that Gilgamesh, gives this ring, or a similar one to someone else, delegating his power and authority.

We can imagine he gives the ring to a woman and so she knows she is protected by the ring.

Anybody bothering her would see the ring, realises that it is from Gilgamesh, nobody wants to get into trouble with Gilgamesh and lets the lady in question unbothered.

Some people will suggest that he captivates her like he did with Humbaba, yes fantasy is free.

Captivates has two meanings, captivates as making her a prisoner or captivates like in enchanting her.

The ring is from the man, among others for the woman, but in the final it is for the man again.

It serves his purpose, not hers.

So the ring hypothetically given to the woman, remains a man's affair.

The woman only has to show the ring, that she is under protection and/or property from Gilgamesh.

The Babylonian civilisation goes over into the Egyptian civilisation. (where the ring remains the Man's affair.)

Over into the civilisation of the Jews. where the ring, the most famous example the "House Wedding rings", is worn during the wedding ceremony as a symbol that he protects her and she keeps the house for him. He gives her the house, she keeps it in order.

No beauty exposure of beauty here neither, a symbol of position.

And when they fled from Egypt taking with them not only their own culture but also large and essential parts of the former cultures.

The ring by the Jews has become the ring of power and in its larger form the necklace for the Egyptians a object of esteem, for the king, the general, the priest an essential attribute

From the Hebrew culture we go to the Greek culture, here woman wear jewellery, but than the Greek culture in its pure form was a democracy. It would not last.

The Etruscans, then the Romans bought the the Jewel back to its position of significance not that as a symbol to show beauty but again as a symbol to show power.

It seems that the jewel in equal measure is as much a male affair as a female affair,

I am inclined to say a male affair as it is the man who holds the important ceremonial meaning of jewel as power symbol under his control.

The Romans, go to Byzantium, and the Roman emperor Constantine becomes the first Christian emperor. 400 AD

From that moment till certainly, the 1500's the Renaissance, the beautifully adorned peacock like male has the Jewel.

The Papal entourage, all beautiful, all male bejewelled people

The Ring has remained from Gilgamesh till King Louis the 16th a predominantly male affair.

The French revolution introduces a new sobriety, and slowly but surely the male is less and less of a magnificent peacock and more and more an elegant official in his grey unobtrusive suit.

Has the Jewel become superfluous?

Or has it finally become an object of adornment or is it still an object to show class and power and prestige?

And is it through the woman that the man exerts showmanship of position? Again, I am inclined to say yes.

The woman might have the Jewel but the appearance of the woman is the Jewel for the man

Still now the Jewel although much minimised in appearance functions as a power symbol

I now see in front of me all those Russian, Korean and Chinese officials decorated with an uncountable amount of colourful medals attached to their uniforms.

Maybe it was Coco Chanel, the first real Revolution to give the Jewel its authentic value back,

Simply, "I am here for the Beauty, I am here to show you my Personality. I am here to Give.

I am not here to take, I am not here to take power over you. I am not here to order you around."

And with Coco Chanel, the Jewels of Fashion Industry. Yves St. Laurent, etc etc

To adorn the woman, nothing more and certainly nothing less.

The Jewel in the street.

When one walks in the street and I have done that for many years in Amsterdam where one million people are living I decided at a certain moment to look everybody in the face and register the persons features and think that at a certain moment I would start to recognise the persons again.

But apart from the street surroundings I was living in, I didn't recognise anybody.

How difficult can it be for the infinite capacities of the brain to register and remember the facial features of only one million passerby's?

How difficult can it be? It is impossible!! I think more or less a year I dedicated myself to this task.

I was sometimes confused when I saw a smiling face and then thought, "Hé here is someone I remember, and apparently remembers me to", but then at longer and closer observation it was, a smiling stranger.

As I was doing this I did recognise sometimes people, but . . . not because of how they looked but on the jewellery they were wearing!

I would recognise a ring, or earrings, from there on I could slowly remember the rest of the person.

I got of course very confused because of this. Is it me who is not capable to simply recognise a human being? or, . . . does the person I look at have so little exclusive visible personality that he or she needs a jewel to be Remark-able

The jewel is fighting a hard battle, it is exceptional and it has to be honoured for what it is.

The object which does not serve a purpose but which is absolutely necessary.

And that is called art. That is the definition of Art.

The object which is good for nothing, but without which it is not possible. Not possible to live maybe even?

«The necessity of the unnecessary object.»

I think this covers it all.

Now if we look at jewellery there is nothing more unnecessary than this really necessary object.

Is life imaginable without jewellery?

No, it simply is not.

And at the same time if you ask what is its purpose?

There actually is no real answer.

Other than maybe saying:

To make remarkable the unremarkable.

To show the Beauty were it was at first obscurely anonymous.

To put into daylight the most important of all.

The beauty of life, to overshadow the dark and the ugly.  
In such a way that one has the right to decide his/her own beauty.  
So in the end this unnecessary is highly necessary.  
Now why has this transition not yet taken place?  
The transition from Design object to Art object?  
The emancipation of the Jewel is taking place is it not?  
Woman makes Jewellery for woman. Women write about it, Curators of design in museums are women.  
Women buy jewellery with their own earned money.  
Jewellery has become accessible. Plastic can be Jewellery.  
Jewellery like Graffiti has gone to the street.  
But unlike Graffiti it has not gotten the ART status.  
And this now is very puzzling.  
Let us take one step back. Let us go to the Art-Part of the museum, not the Design-Part.  
Who decides here? (of course there are exceptions, but as a general rule?)  
The man, and it is the man who can decide if he yes or no is willing to give the jewel the Art status. To give the Jewel to the woman.  
And as it does not happen, (Exceptions are the Jewels of 'real' artists like Picasso, Dali, Karl Schmidt Rutlof, Alexander Calder. meret Oppenheimer)  
we can conclude that he does not let it happen.  
He can decide if he is willing to let the women and her Jewel affaire in his Sanctum.  
If the Jewel made by the woman, judged, bought, valued can have an equal in status to Painting, Sculpture and all the other 'real art forms' it would become part of Man decided Art scene.  
Would he do that, he would let the woman have an equal position as he himself holds.  
And I personally am inclined to believe that Man (the modern day priest in an Atheistic society) is not yet that emancipated that he is willing to take that step.  
That means we are in a situation which apparently shows enormous development, but that is only appearance, in essence  
since the days of Gilgamesh not much has changed  
Woman can play with jewellery, but it is the man who decides what the intensity, meaning or value is with what she plays.  
And what finally happened to Gilgamesh?  
After he performed all the requested tasks?  
He was tired, he fell asleep, and when he woke up he wanted his half divinity reward. But the gods spoke and they said.  
You fell asleep and gods don't sleep.  
There is of course a similarity between Gilgamesh and the Ring.  
Both wish to escape Death and being forgotten, both wish to enter the Pantheon the holiest of the holy,  
Both see their path blocked by Severe deities and Modern day priests.  
Burt Gilgamesh lost. He fell asleep and Ring now knows to keep knocking on the door saying "Hé let me in, I am Awake!"