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Death and Life in Homer and Gilgamesh

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ABSTRACT

Concepts of death vary. Works of literature have shaped Western culture's concept of death, and within a particular tradition, none more so than The Epic of Gilgamesh and Homer. We should examine how they conceive of death and respond to it to understand what death is in relation to the natural cycle of life. As living beings, we see the stability constituted by human organs, *thumos*, and *nous* to disappear with *menos*. Meanwhile, the natural world erodes into the cultural world. The constant *changingness* surrounds man in nature, and organic life is ultimately drawn into the "meaninglessness" of artificial "meaning." The inauthentic Achilles in Homer rejects the naturalness of life, and the inauthentic Gilgamesh rejects the naturalness of death. They both fail to recognize themselves through the equal of Patroclus and Enkidu, fundamentally seeking for something that they fail to understand the nature and truth of what accounts for life and death. The meaning of our life depends on others. To remind the living about the death of that individual urges the living to return to its everyday life. This paper attempts to point out the unnaturalness of civilization and the concepts of death associated with that definition in war, reinforced through the meanings of heroes, glory, and funeral.

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1.

The Seeking of Death and Life—An Ambivalent Relationship

The meanings of our lives depend on others. Then the question of what accounts for the meaning of our existence comes to be. Through an investigation of the deaths of those heroes in the Iliad and Gilgamesh, we can propose an argument that both the war that provides the glory and honor for the heroes and the existence of hero itself are two artificial inventions of human activities that are unnatural when putting into the context of the broader dimension of the natural world. As argued above, civilization makes the natural food web unnatural. One function of civilization is its effect that solves some survivors' issues by forming a community that collectively fights against the natural disasters and threats in the environment. However, the side effect turns out to be the target that was once the animals or threats in the environment now transformed into other human beings in the setting of war. It is no longer a fight for natural resources but a fight for power.

After the death of human beings, we can no longer use the concepts of *menos*, *thumos*, and *nous* in relation to organic living things to understand the end of human life. At the final moment of death, life itself loses life energy and mobility (*menos*), the organs no longer work, the breath (*thumos*) stops, and even the *nous* that connects with perception ceases to exist. The dead individual losing his *nous* means that he cannot have the world view to see himself, others, or the world. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing here that the dead individual is still living in other people's *nous*, as a part of other members of the community's rational perception. Although

the dead individuals cannot construct new meanings of the world that they once lived, their meanings preserved in their construction infinitely involve constructing the life of living people.

Besides the two exceptions used by Hektor, *nekros* and *nekus* both refer to the dead body of human beings in a normal situation, whereas *soma* designates for the animal corpse. An analogy is displayed in XVII: 161-164, where just like the shepherd cannot drive away from the hungry lion from *the soma*, two Ajax cannot drive Hektor away from *nekros*. Homer often compares the fight for dead human bodies to the fight that animals are haunting the preys (XIII: 195, XVII: 106, XVII: 275, XVII: 724). Nevertheless, neither *nekros* nor *nekus* has been treated like food to feed the animals. Thus, the audience will read that a hungry lion happily runs towards a *soma* (III: 23, XVIII: 161) or a lion who is not hungry crossing *nekus* to proceed (X: 299) in typical situations.

Psyche and *nekros* or *nekus* are two major underlying concepts in order to understand death in the Epic. We first approach death through the corpse concept in Homer, which provides us with an illuminating direction into the ambiguity in the relationship between death and life. In Homer's explanation, a scholar once proposed that word designates for the corpse (not living body) in the Epic is *soma* (Snell, 2012). However, in the Iliad, the word that designates for the body after death should be *nekros* or *nekus*. According to the frequency of each word in the Iliad, *soma* appears five times, whereas *nekros* and *nekus* appear seventy-two and fifty-four times.

Moreover, *soma* often refers to the corpse of the animal body. In the five times of its presences, three of them are used as describing the corpse of an animal body expects two times that refer to a human corpse. However, the two exceptions of using *soma* embodying the human

corpse come from Hektor's speeches, and the contents for these two times are repetitive. The two exceptions occur when Hektor wants his *soma* to be taken back home so that the Trojans can burn his body as deserved (VII: 79) and asks for mercy before death (XX: 342). Hektor unintentionally parallels his dead body with the animal body (*soma*) yet requests for the funeral that only a dead human body (*nekros* or *nekus*) deserved. In the same conversation (VII: 77-85), Hektor calls his body *soma*, but when he mentions that if he kills the Acaios, they can bring their bodies to the boats, he uses *nekus*. When signifying the function of human funerals, the underlying meaning of his body has a cultural function that serves the community. In contrast, when it comes to the function of death itself, there is no distinction between the body of the animal that embodies nature and the body of human beings, suggesting the line between nature and human being concerning death is only apparent when the meaning originated from human civilization plays a role.

In Homer's Iliad, he further proposed the idea of arrogation in Hektor's attempt to feed the dead human body to animals, fundamentally challenging our common perception of the clear distinction between life and death in relation to animals (from nature) and human beings (from civilization). At the battle between Hektor and Patroclus, Hektor takes off Patroclus' armor and wants to hand over Patroclus' *nekus* to the dogs (XVII: 125-7). Combined with the two exceptions indicated in Hektor's "misuse" of *soma* and *nekus*, the contradiction and tragedy in the nature of Hektor once again reveals his unique role in the Iliad. Hektor's role in the Iliad is to obey and care the human laws the most by prioritizing the community's need associated with glory and honor. He fights for honor, dies for the meaning that the community occupied. However, his attempt that continuously crosses beyond the line between the natural world and

human civilization suggests that Hektor is performing human beings' understanding of the concepts of life and death through a series of struggles, yet it has to be done. To understand death is not to define for it but instead go under it through a series of processes, just as Hektor and Enkidu undergo the sufferings and sacrifices.

As the process of understanding death and *psyche*, Hektor's experiences presented in the Iliad foreshadows that human beings cannot distinguish between life and death so clearly. The relationship between life and death is ambiguous, and life and death are not opposites. Similarly, in The Epic of Gilgamesh, Enkidu's transformation from an animal-like creature in nature through a series of human activities associated with exceeding desires to the end of returning to the natural Earth is an indication that echoes Homer's message. Human beings strive to maintain their superior status on the food web by failing to recognize ourselves as the same food resources to serve the animals. Our indoctrination has been signifying the unnaturalness of identifying ourselves as a part of nature, creating an utter fear that conditioned the naturalness of human life as a part of the cycle of nature as unnatural. By twisting the meaning of human life that intends to be absorbed into Earth after death, possibly through decay and being eaten up by other animals, the artificial indoctrination educates the community members to separate ourselves from the natural cycle.

The immortality of circular nature is not what they intended for, as illustrated in the tragic death of Achilles, who seeks honor and glory via his death yet dead in a battlefield by the arrow from Paris without honor and glory and the ironic ending of Gilgamesh in which he fails to seek immortality when the snake steals his plant. At the same time, he is distracted by "a pool of cool water" (XI: 286-289). Achilles seeks immortality from the glory of his death, whereas Gilgamesh

seeks linear immortality to escape the naturalness of the cycle of life. Both the Epic of Gilgamesh and Homer's Iliad emphasizes how human beings throughout history have been yearning to reject the natural cycle, whereas, in reality, it contradicts the authentic understanding of immortality embedded in nature.

The unnaturalness in civilization is our conception that structuring the understanding of death and life. As human beings seek the unnaturalness rather than the naturalness, a problem of questioning occurs. At the ontic level of beings, it is the *existentiell* aspect of Dasein in which Dasein understands its existence "in terms of its possibilities to be itself" or not, emphasizing the particular possibilities for particular beings (Heidegger 5-8). Heidegger identifies that being itself or not often goes into either authenticity and inauthenticity. The authentic Dasein is deeply attuned toward the affirmation of life itself. In acknowledging and embracing the meaning of death, Hektor accomplishes the authenticity of his life. Through Heidegger's questioning, we see two roles about seeking and the sought. When it comes to seeking, we seek something like an attitude or a disposition toward what we reseed, explicitly adopted by the questioner. To understand death and its relation with the natural world, we must be seeking willingly, subsiding all the other assumptions established by public recognition. The understanding of death requires the process that undergoes willful questioning that challenges traditional perception. Enkidu and Hektor are processes that the ancient text yearns to show us by inviting us to examine the experiences that they go through in civilization and war. When it comes to the sought, we seek with prior guidance, under the fact that we already grasped and knew what is meant and the feeling is relevant. Therefore, there is ambiguity in questioning in which the prior guidance treated this is already there in place. Our yearning for the answers to what death and life mean

depends on our prior guidance of the "sought," Thus, we will always fail to answer those questions if we maintain our questioning within the social context that came before our existence.

The living dead bodies reveal the problem of death and, at the same time, the problem of whether or not this is natural. To question it, we must learn the seeking rather than merely relying on the sought. As relational beings, we have to rely on other things to acquire a sense of what we are looking for. Our understanding of life and death also depends on both the individuality that is drastically shaped by the surrounding civilization and civilization as a whole. However, to approach each concept's meaning, the context of both life and death is not ultimate, as the contingency of meaning is unreliable, the external force of understanding turns out to be ambivalent.

2.

Transition from the Natural World to Civilization

It is contradictory in Gilgamesh's attempt to destroy the natural relationship with nature by rejecting the goddess of fertility, Ishtar, whereas he is yearning for immortality in a natural cycle. *Nature* is a continuous cycle that embeds both death and life simultaneously. All living beings undergo destruction from birth to death and formation from death to birth. The ancient Babylonians are deeply attuned to affirm that death for life is not an ultimate end but rather a part belonging to the continuous cycle of the natural world. Human progress advances are through war, which is unnatural since the competition is no longer aiming at fighting for resources that ensure survival but killing each other for other purposes. The contradiction occurred through Gilgamesh's ambivalent behaviors because the immortality that Gilgamesh seeks is a linear structure, whereas what nature contains and offers is a cyclic structure. This contradiction is prevalently problematic till today in our attempt to insert something durable into the natural cycle that violates how nature fundamentally works. Human culture engages in the context that nature does not follow, and there is a sharp distinction between civilization and the natural world. The argument is not about the emphasis of the sharp distinction between naturalness and unnaturalness. Instead, it points out what is unnatural in how we ascribe meanings and values onto natural existences, including war, death, civilization, and our relationship with nature.

The problem being identified in ancient texts is still prevalent through the history of human struggle. In any process of production, there is a violation of the natural cycle. Marx's

maxim of human struggle explained how the epochal transformation occurred from feudalism through capitalism to socialism. According to the movement of history, there are four stages of history: the ancient model of production, feudalism, capitalism, and also anticipated communism. Within the four stages, the engine of history is a human struggle. During the production model, it is a mere productive force in the relation of production, where the resources are intellectual. However, with the development of regulation of the production, people enter into the stage of feudal production, where productive forces determine the mode of production. These productive forces are the tools needed to do agricultural farming in feudal society, mostly with manual labor built-in with technology. The relation of production in the feudal order is the relationship between the lord and the serf. The productive force reaches a certain point at a kind of relationship that people are no longer possible for the productive force, under the invention of the steam machine during industrialization, that both the production and relations of production become no longer tenable. Due to colonization and globalization with the development of the industrial revolution, history frees everyone from production as "the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chase the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe," and "it must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere" (Marx 476). The technology development no longer matches the relationship and workforce, and thus the feudal relationship collapsed and was replaced by the capitalist society.

Marx and Engels state that "what the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers" (Marx 483). Marx determines the production of the bourgeoisie as its "gravediggers" because of the deterioration as a result of bourgeois industries, allowing the proletariat a revolutionary future that will after all overrides bourgeois's oppression that

completely alienates human beings out of the relation of production. Similarly, what the heroes in the ancient texts aim at ultimately causes their tragic death.

There is both unnaturalness of the meanings of heroes and the wars they fight for. By establishing the authority that has the power to determine what account for honor, the conception of heroes come to be, and it becomes ingrained into each generation's ideological state apparatus, in which the fixed association between death on the battlefield and glory is firmly established through satisfaction of preservation individuality and accumulation of power structure held in place through the community. Homer confirms that war is unnatural: there is satiety in all things, including sleep and lovemaking, in the loveliness of singing and the innocent dance. In all these things, a man will strive sooner to win satisfaction than in war; but in this, the Trojans cannot be gluttoned (XIII: 636-9).

Everything is satisfying, whereas the least satisfying is war. There are two levels of meaning in wars that heroes fight for in terms of glory and honor. The first is at the individual level. The individual satisfaction of the war years for the title of a hero so that his individuality can be preserved to achieve immortality. In this case, heroes are eager to die in war to win public recognition and social dominance. At the individual level, the heroes themselves are deeply attuned towards the meanings of life and death they have created. The generations that after them can follow the tradition of glory and honor to protect their own country and maintain the social order that deep-rooted in power. They are fighting for in the war is not about resources for survival but individual glory and the power of the collective community. What is problematic is at the second level of the community, in which the community takes advantage of the individual's meaning of glory and honor. All of the heroes, including Achilles and Hektor from the Iliad and

Gilgamesh and Enkidu from The Epic of Gilgamesh, end up being dead. The way they pursue ends up destroying them. Nevertheless, their individualities have been preserved till today, serving the purpose of delivering the warnings to us, reminding us that there are problems in understanding the existence of war, death, civilization, and our relationship with the natural world. In a sense, their immortality has been achieved, but not for themselves.

There is a purpose for their individuality to be remembered for the next generations to serve as the models for the persons after them follow their path that recognized universal as good and glorious. The four heroes in ancient texts have been divided into two major groups of authentic Dasein of Hektor and Enkidu and inauthentic Dasein of Achilles and Gilgamesh. In the Iliad, there is a discrepancy in the understandings of death and the Dasein in Achilles and Hektor. Achilles knows about his inescapable death, yet he does not care, preserving his inauthenticity to himself. Rather than fighting for his army not to save lives, Achilles is fighting because of his wrath and rage toward the satisfaction of the ultimate goal of glory of himself and vengeance for Patroclus. Death for Achilles is not relating to himself, and he fails to recognize his identity in Patroclus through the mirror image. The death of Patroclus is the symbolic death of Achilles himself without self-recognition (Moore 33-47). However, Hektor is uncertain that his death will come on the battlefield with Achilles, yet he authentically cares about it in relation to his wife and son. It is his duty to defend his country and his responsibility to care for his people, which makes his life and death meaningful to himself and his family and community. Hektor explicitly acknowledges death concerning himself, so does Gilgamesh, who is profoundly relating to his own death, yet in a deadly way.

There are no oaths and contracts between human beings and the natural world. During the battle between Achilles and Hektor, Achilles confronts this fact and characterizes it as hatred (XXII: 250-). Like Gilgamesh rejecting Ishtar due to the impossibility of a contract, this is the same phenomenon appearing in Homer. Achilles appears to be more than human beings in which he has imported something super-human into this context. Achilles acting out of rage, wrath is hyperbolic in a way that rejects society utterly. By rejecting all the systems dealing with the meaning of life and death, Achilles breaks out the symbolic structure that makes death make sense. He enters into a realm where death becomes senseless, as wrath smashes the symbolic structure of mourning and the meaninglessness of death that society established. Achilles' death is the devotion to death, which sets aside the whole material-economy concept, which is totally unnatural through vengeance. Animals in the natural world do not fight each other to die. They try to avoid conflicts. The devotion to war in the name of glory and honor that Achilles seeks is problematic, and we have to struggle with it. In Achilles' battle with Hektor, Homer emphasizes the shield's description in which the entire cosmos appears within a limited frame (XVIII: 483). Although the heroes can claim individual glory from war, war itself is related to many other human beings, collective entities, and the natural world. The death of the self is authentic as long as it is associated with the world surrounding it. It is impossible to perform aggressive actions that are free of consequences in a community and nature. Homer is no longer describing the shield anymore but the world behind the shield. The dancing floor described in the Iliad is a world destroyed by war, a war that Achilles decides to go for (XVIII: 590-607). In choosing death instead, he cuts out of this ongoing life of humankind, reminding us that things that he gives up. Nevertheless, he wears the emblem of that world, the living world, on this shield that

he carries into the battle. We are surrounded by death in the story, and the shield shows us what surrounds the story is this whole cycle of the living world. The war ambushes on death are included in the shield, suggesting that it is not the ultimate reality of things.

The sharp distinction between Gilgamesh, who are both relating to their deaths, is Gilgamesh's blindness that fails to relate his life to his community and the natural world. Friendship is established by feeling a weakness Enkidu has from Gilgamesh. According to Hegel's articulation of desire, desire is for an object, but once one has it, what she receives out of it is herself, more of herself. Out of this object, she receives an "I." The energy that keeps her going on for Hegel is a particular item. There is no self involved in desire, but going through this process gives her a self. Desire negates its object, and in negating the other, the self becomes the opposite of the other (Hegel 167). Through negation, Gilgamesh receives himself by being reminded of his death, and thus flight becomes his primary action. Gilgamesh and Enkidu have a relationship of complementation. The mother of Gilgamesh, Ninsun, who knows everything, says to Gilgamesh that someone is the same as him, and he is born in the wild and grows in the mountain. Even the prostitute from the Temple says to Enkidu that he will love Gilgamesh as much as loving himself (I: 250-300). Like a coin must be constituted with two sides, the Babylonians use their unity of the opposites from the bodies to character to imply that the great man contains both humanity and barbarity, reason and sensibility, and thought and emotion in one body. When Gilgamesh and Enkidu are beyond control, they want someone else—a companion. The truth of desire from Hegel is self-consciousness. Human beings need to go through differences to become ourselves.

An individual needs to go under in order to go over, to overcome. The sacrifice of the self for the Earth is the movement between human nature and transiting human nature to something beyond human nature (Nietzsche 14-15). The authentic Dasein that Hektor and Enkidu show is true to the Earth: the growing, the dying, and the always coming to pass. Earth, the constant generator, is always dying and always giving life.

In representing the symbolic self of Achilles and Enkidu in embodying the "equal" Gilgamesh, Patroclus ceases to allow the Dasein of Achilles and Gilgamesh to experience other's death. Ultimately, Gilgamesh, similar to Achilles, fails to recognize the symbolic death of himself is Enkidu's natural choice and ending for all human beings. The possibility of other's death acting as a substitute for understanding death of our own is being rejected in both Achilles and Gilgamesh, who embodied the "manly" men. When the body becomes the corpse, we still care about it. No matter what we do, we cannot understand it through the suffering and loss for the other. This relates to the nature of being-with, which generally in being-with, we can represent the other with more or less accuracy; however, there is a breakdown here when it comes to death. Death is utterly mine and cannot be shared with anyone else. There is no such a kind of substitution. Dying is ontologically constituted by *mineness*, a unique phenomenon when it comes to Dasein; as long as we can tell any experiences, there is always a substitution or representation but not death. Because death is the only one purely mine alone, the other here fails to help us understand what it means for Dasein to die, serving as a virtual tie with the social meaning. The lack of ability to live one's death creates the possibility of inauthenticity. It is impossible to experience death by ourselves nor through others. Thus, in order to understand it, we need to illustrate that death itself for the self only, as Gilgamesh is relating to his death in a

deadly way that aims at avoiding it rather than embracing it, is inauthentic. He fails to reconcile between himself and the natural world through our relation of death to nature and the community.

Gilgamesh's attempt to destroy the natural dependence between human beings and nature is unnatural about human activities. When the goddess of fertility, Ishtar, has offered a chance of immortality from the natural world, Gilgamesh's rejection proves the ambivalent nature of his understanding of death and our relationship with the natural world (VI: II). There are three reasons that Gilgamesh rejects Ishtar. First, there is an unequal relationship between Ishtar and Gilgamesh. With Ishtar being the superior one, Gilgamesh cannot offer Ishtar anything. A power relationship is a contract between a person who needs something and the person who provides them. In this case, Gilgamesh has no power over Ishtar, making him incapable of compelling her to do anything. When nature offers, one cannot compel something to appear for him to consume since it has to do itself. Human beings are deeply dependent on a world not owing anything to us: we are at its mercy. Second, the natural variability Ishtar offers makes things unreliable. Ishtar offers to provide all things, but she does not always give things Gilgamesh wants. Gilgamesh is eager to control this variability that nature possesses. Third, Gilgamesh desires immortality in his current form, wishing his deeds to be immortal, contradictory to how Ishtar turns human beings into other animals (Sentesy, 2021). According to Ishtar's principle of transformation, after one dies, one turns into other things. What the natural world offers to human beings is not a reservation but integration into the natural world, which is a cycle of changing into other things over and over. In wanting to be memorialized, Gilgamesh is sought to be cut off from this cycle. He pursues extended identity and transcended the cycle of life.

The immortality Gilgamesh pursues is a fitness between the cycle of life and the line of mortality, which is fundamentally unnatural. The naturalness of life and death would require being absorbed into the soil again. After death, the return of life through this natural process causes Gilgamesh's ultimate rejection of the cyclic nature of life. After the rejection, Ishtar sends the Bull of Heaven to kill Gilgamesh, but defeated by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, evoking punishment from Gods. In part three, the Gods decide to make Enkidu die. After the death of Enkidu, the elimination of individuality reminds Gilgamesh of his death, leading him to a series of experiences of fear as illustrated in the Defense Cascade Model that starts with an inhibitory behavior and then engages in activating behaviors that associate with either flight or fight (Kozłowska, Kasia, et al., 2015). The initial action conducted by Gilgamesh is the avoidance of death, as illustrated in his yearning for immortality. Despite the death of Enkidu that was once his equal, Gilgamesh fails to relate to Enkidu's death. Walking all over the world to find the solution to death, Gilgamesh fails. The Epic uses symbolic meaning to imply the philosophy of life and death: life and death are not merely the opposite of one another as understood by civilization; rather, any attempt in distorting the naturalness of life will ultimately fail and become its own "Gravedigger." Although Gilgamesh, as the King builds the walls around the city, acting as the protector of the city of Uruk, while the people praise his power, wisdom, and appearance, they also display hatred towards him (IX: 11-33). He consumes on his own people by leaving no sons to their fathers and no daughters to their mothers shows how unnatural and problematic civilization is (I: 68-100).

The ancient texts expand the stories into contemplating how our concepts structuring life and death can twist the meanings and our relationships to them, based on the question of the

relationship between life and death. Human beings learn the inevitability of death very early but are not satisfied with this destiny. They want to transcend death and achieve immortality.

The phenomenon illuminated in death is a kind of authentic self-showing. In contrast, the semblance as a kind of self-showing that shows itself as something it is not through self-seeming in the examples of Achilles and Gilgamesh reveals the inauthenticity of the unnatural human conception of understanding the natural phenomenon. They have concealed themselves from the phenomenon, yet the phenomenon is still there. Enkidu and Hektor both serve to understand the fundamental principles about life and death that play the role of mediation in appearances. It is a referential relation, containing a sense of potency, in being themselves, through the "as-structure" (Heidegger 29-32). Myth forms the way we think about death, providing a space that leaps ahead for us. In Heidegger's concept of leaping-ahead, it is not taking care away but authentically giving it back to the individual, as though he lost it. Possible Dasein authentically taking up its letting be and use it toward a particular end, and in this case, it is the leaping-ahead that frees others for their possibilities. The Epic of Gilgamesh and Homer has provided an understanding and freeing Dasein to take up to understanding. The way that civilization describes death and how the ancient story is told brings new possibilities in understanding death.

When associating with life, the most frequent concepts that appear in the Iliad are *menos*, *thumos*, and *nous*. The basic meaning of *menos* is power or force, and *thumos* means the breath of human beings (or animals). The relationship between *menos* and *thumos* can be understood via the process of breathing, where the air belonging to the natural world enters into the pulmonary lobe (*phrenes*) and then turns into the thumos of men (or animals). With the ability to move, *thumos*, as a kind of energy, must have some kinds of *menos*. *Thumos*, as an

element naturally existed, possess the material *menos*, or force. In contrast, as the energy that exists in organic forms for men (or animals), *thumos* possesses the organic features insofar that it maintains the continuity of organs and the whole organic existence, contributing to preserving the life energy for the organic entity. People in the Epic contend that these two forces are interlinked since the origin of life comes from *thumos* that fill the chest (*phrenes*) by pertaining *menos* possessed by the natural air. Via the exchange of air, the process of breathing accomplishes the transportation of *menos*, or force. Therefore, any *thumos* placed on this link of metabolism can be described as *menos*. In other words, *menos* is the essence of *thumos* and life. *Menos* designates for anything that produces effects, which is "to have force," such as things that preserve energy while in motion and organs that are functioning. The most typical example incorporating *menos* in the *Iliad* occurs when Hektor responds to Achilles's declaration of the battle that he will fight against Achilles even though "his hands are like flame, and his heart (*menos*) like the shining of iron (XX. 372)."

The original meaning of *thumos* relates to the breath produced by breathing. When air enters the human body, it is no longer the complete material air of nature but possesses the feature of life. During breathing, we are constantly conscious of the organs performing their functions, and any fluctuations in our emotions and attitudes will affect the frequency and states of breathing. It is not radical to say that for any states that we are in, to the most significant degree, we are sensitively influencing *thumos*. In the Epic, the relationship between breathing and the situation we place ourselves in is expressed through language. They do not say, "I am feeling scared, and my breathing speeds up"; instead, they tend to say, "I feel scared in my breathing." *Thumos* seems to equal man's perception of his observed behaviors, including the

instantaneous wrath and pain and the planned and learned decision-making process. When discussing one's sensation, people in the *Iliad* states "my body is sensing or perceiving" instead of "I am sensing my body." *Thumos*, which can also be understood as a kind of conscious perception, is a re-shaping process after the living body is given natural substance through metabolism. Because of *thumos*, men become the living beings that can respond and react to the surrounding environment.

In human beings' lives, besides the concepts of *menos* and *thumos* that are associated with movement, another important one is *nous*, of which relates to seeing and thinking. However, what *nous* performs is not only seeing a thing but sees it with the ability to recognize it. When Sarpedon speaks with Hektor, he says he "can see not one of these men now, I know not where they are " (V: 475). When Ajax nods at Phoenix, Odysseus understands what it means. Penelope fails to recognize Odysseus's scar because Athena has transferred her *nous* (XIX:). *Nous* is a function related to reason, and it entitles meanings for things that it perceives. Based on this assumption, perhaps to a certain degree *nous* further shapes *thumos*, whereas the division between these two is not opposing to each other insofar that they do not correspond with emotions and reasonings nowadays. It is not right to assume that what *thumos* perceives is the particular and what *nous* grasps is the general. Similar to *thumos*, *nous* is also a perceiving of its own body that does not begin with bodily perception of the beings. Instead, it begins from the outside perspective. The difference in perception from outside and inside perspectives determines the difference between *thumos* and *nous*. *Thumos* that perceives from the inside possesses *menos*, whereas *nous* that perceives from the outside does not have *menos*. For the life of human beings, both *thumos* and *nous* are about "being-in-the-world," which serves as the

fundamental principle that man can perceive the whole state, with a variation that *thumos* emphasizes on the segment of man, as it comes from the self so that the perception relies on its own body's consciousness as its pathway, following with the active emotions. *Nous*, on the other hand, is inclined towards the segment of the world, in which it comes from the world, not relying on its own body's perception, and thus it is passive. It uses others' sight as its pathway, better understanding the association of "being-in," or better understanding the social aspect of beings.

The natural or unnatural understanding of the human-nature relationship shows up in concepts of death. The ambiguity between life and death is conveyed through the life of Enkidu, where he begins his root from nature through a series of experiences of indoctrination from human civilization to the end of returning to his natural origin. Created as the equal of Gilgamesh, Enkidu's body is covered with hair that is as long as a female, and he cannot recognize human beings or identify a particular country. Living with gazelles and other animals is the origin of his life from nature (I: 105-112). However, nature can be altered into the form of civilization through the temptation of culture. Enkidu's perversion comes when his desire for pleasure exceeds his natural deeds. In sleeping with the temple prostitute for days and nights, he goes from having a desire that has a natural limit to ultimately owning up to limitless desire, which shifts his relationship with the natural world. Enkidu loses his power and becomes weak; animals that used to surround him now walk away, and the purity of his body is now being contaminated (I: 197-199). The desire for pleasure reinforces our needs. As long as one's desire directs to what she needs, then this is good since this is the norm. However, starting desire for its own sake, in contrast to what one needs, has a natural limit to the amount that one can consume;

there is no natural limit any longer, which can last forever. Enkidu now possesses humanity.

After being tempted by the temple prostitute, Enkidu decides to head towards Uruk, where the civilization of human life begins its journey through agriculture.

People living in the city discuss his birth originating from the mountain (I: 174) and was fed by the milk of beasts (II). Even when Gilgamesh introduces Enkidu to his mother, his origin from nature is still emphasized again via his disheveled hair and appearance (II: 176-177). When arguing about whether they should march into the cedar forest, Gilgamesh reminds Enkidu that he was born in the wild field where both lions and young men fear his existence (II: 237-239). Enkidu is now in a dilemma, where the line that distinguishes him from both a human being and a naturally derived animal becomes clear. When Gilgamesh decides to kill Humbaba, even Enkidu, who symbolizes Gilgamesh's instinctual internal emotion, senses the fear toward the unnaturalness of breaking the cycle of nature. However, Gilgamesh's reason encourages Enkidu that human life is limited. In Gilgamesh's articulation and the reason to conquer nature, life passes like clouds and smokes. As the fear of death eliminates the spirit of a hero, the only way to make them immortal is to pass their names from generation to generation (IV: 247-250). He trespasses the distinction between a human being and a natural being, resulting in rejection and hatred from Humbaba, who mocks about Enkidu's wild origin with no father or mother like a fish, nor had a taste of breastmilk like a turtle (V: 87-88). None of the turtle and fish are mammals, illuminating the nature of Enkidu that he might have an origin from the Earth. This humiliation might explain that Enkidu disregards Humbaba's begging for mercy and announces his death by encouraging Gilgamesh to end Humbaba's life (Wasserman 595). The adoption by Gilgamesh's mother, Ninsun, that undertakes the name of Gilgamesh's brother does not justify

his bloodline or the origin as a human being. While nature constantly resists the effort of culture transforming its identity into civilization, civilization rejects the reconciliation between nature and human beings. At the final scene of Enkidu's death, Enkidu rejects Gilgamesh's recommendation of his individuality being preserved in a human monument and eventually returns to nature with Gilgamesh holding a funeral commemorating Enkidu's root in nature. Nietzsche's articulation of creation is "the greatest redemption from suffering, and life's growing light" (Nietzsche 87). There is always a push from within to go beyond itself. The "bitter dying" that Enkidu goes under is a transformation that does not shift his identity easily. As indicated by Nietzsche, "to be the child who is newly born, the creator must also want to be the mother who gives birth and the pangs of the birth-giver" (Nietzsche 87). Enkidu's body becomes the advocate of impermanence in this very activity, the difference between standing and steady, words that suggest holding in one place.

Although Enkidu's transformed from a wild creature of nature into a member of human civilization through culture, a way of teaching, he already possesses intelligence that makes him different from the other animals in the wild. As a prerequisite of culture or civilization, intelligence is concerning *nous*, which can continue to exist when separated from natural elements. Civilization, along with artifice, can thus continue to live, and this is how we can attribute it to immortality.

What distinguishes Enkidu from a purely animal is his access to intelligence, as shown in his behaviors of removing the traps and releasing the preys and animals haunted by human beings (I: 151-160). Despite appearing to be wildlife from nature, Enkidu still exhibits the potency to become a member of the human community. Nevertheless, he belongs to neither the

human side nor the natural side. His potency serves as a process of understanding the relationship between human beings and nature. Enkidu achieves his complete self at the death after experiencing human civilization and eventually chooses to return to Earth. Dasein, in its everyday-care, is not a whole, whereas Dasein achieves its complete self when it reaches death. Enkidu's death becomes meaningful to Gilgamesh and us in understanding the cyclic nature between life and death. For a being like Dasein, it is only ever a whole (at least so far as we can understand it) in death. In its there-ness, the possibility of being something else, when we lose that there-ness, is the only time we can be complete, as the "there" grants the wholeness. This introduces the inquiry into the question—what is death for Dasein? Heidegger presents death as the no-longer Dasein equaling to death (Heidegger 230-245). The meaningfulness of life is complete after death. After death, Enkidu is no longer a human being nor an animal. However, he achieves his completeness of the self through death by creating meanings for other living beings around him and the world that he lives in.

A "not-yet" of death that belongs to Dasein creates a kind of possibility for death that can be beneficial to the community as well as nature. This not-yet character of Dasein stops in death, which is solely mine. Heidegger questions us, in what sense is this not-yet of death, which is going to be, is something that we have? If the meaning of one's death belongs to the community and generations after this individual, both Hektor and Enkidu's meaning of death depends on the community. Dasein is what it becomes, which in turn means Dasein is its death. Dasein, as being of not-yet, is what Dasein is, containing a potency. Death is also something that Dasein is, and it is a particular and unique kind of not-yet, which comes to an end, which is solely mine.

However, the question becomes, how do we have it? Being that is essentially not yet and can also

be the possibility of not being, transitioning from being to not being. The only moment of wholeness is when not taking over. In this sense, death belongs to Dasein. The not-yet has to do with which belongs to us insofar that *I* am going to connect myself to that possibility, feeling as though being in this world and having the possibility that belongs to mine. As a unique possibility, death provides a bridge in which everything of not-yet we have is a bridge to something.

Rather than embodying the animals of nature, Enkidu is the transition, or an explanation, that connects nature with life. After the individual's death, his *nous* can continue to exist through the construction of the life of society by the *nous* of the community members. Enkidu's death in reminding Gilgamesh of the meaning of life awakens Gilgamesh's potency, which is why Gilgamesh is profoundly relating to himself through his potency being awakened by Enkidu yet remains as inauthentic to himself by neglecting the phenomenon that Enkidu as the mediator strives to show him. In Tablet VII, where Enkidu enters into the underworld through the dream, animals suddenly transformed into animals as he is turned into the animal form, and the animals can also transform into human beings:

The paws of a lion were his paws; the talons of an eagle were
his talons.
He grabbed a tuft of my hair and overpowered me.
...up he leaps;
...he bore me down,
...upon me
...my body
...
...he transformed me
...like [the wings of] a bird, my arms (VII: 19-31)

The death that Enkidu undergoes is a transformation into life for the ancient Babylonians. Different living species have no classifications that divide them into different domains; instead, the line between each domain can flow from one another, as illustrated in how Enkidu has transformed from a wild creature into a human being. Each domain can interconnect and transform with the other. Therefore, the ancient Babylonians' view of the cyclic nature of death and life differed from how the ancient Greeks view death. The ancient Babylonians in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* view death as a transformation from one form into another. Death is not the ultimate end of life.

Nous and *psyche* are inseparable from one another; the line between them remains ambiguous. *Nous* does not possess the *menos* (force) that inherited from nature, but it enables human life with the possibility to continue existing when separating from natural elements. After death, the meaning of one's existence can be extended in other members' *nous*, allowing individuality to be preserved through immortality on a cultural basis.

In modern times, like Descartes' philosophy of the mind, *psyche* differs from Homer's ancient understanding of the active *psyche* activities. In Snell's *The Discovery of the Mind* (2012), he contends that humans are like the vessel that contains and collects all kinds of energy or forces in Homer. The power of all kinds of material and spiritual organs is fighting with each other within each human body. Claus (1981) rejects Snell's idea of the mode of life energy by indicating that we should distinguish *psyche* based on its somatic meanings between the *psyche* about thinking and *psyche* about life energy. *Psyche* in ancient epics should be understood in the mode of life energy. While *psyche* exists, man is alive; whereas while *psyche* leaves, then life is dead.

Homer, on the other hand, focuses on the shadow aspect of *psyche*. The shadow side of *psyche* is predominantly used in the Iliad, which suppressed the meaning of life energy. In Homer, we can confirm that the *psyche* uniquely belongs to man, but the characters barely mentioned the *psyche's* nature. In Homer, most often, we only see *psyche* flying away, leaving, released, or taken away from man's body. Although Homer's *psyche* is related to man's life (Iliad IX: 408–, Odyssey X: 560, XI: 222), *psyche* does not determine whether a man is alive or not, nor does it determine how man lives. To the extent that takes *psyche* as the principle of human life, it is not conceived by the living but constructed our concepts or experiences of death. We need the concept of *psyche* for us to envision the uncertain death.

We know about *psyche* that they have the same faces (eidolon) as they were alive (XXIII: 72, 104; Odyssey XI: 205–), and *psyche* belongs to Hades. The imageries constantly appear: if not being buried, *psyche* cannot go to Hades (Iliad XXIII: 71). Without incineration, *psyche* will return to the living world from hades to live in the living people's dreams, begging for funerals (XIII: 76). The difference between the soul in Classical Greeks and Homer's *psyche* is that whether *psyche* comes to be after man's death, it is conceived not as the fundamental principle that governs life for the living but a connection needed for people at that time to understand and experience the concept of death.

3.

The Fear of Death

The threats brought by death cause us to fear it. Death becomes a problem for us because of our concepts of body, individuality, and community. The decay of dead body as inorganic beings evoke disease and bacterial infection, signaling the need of the corpse to return to the Earth. While Earth engenders life, death returns life to Earth. Therefore, the line between life and death is never straightforward. Despite Enkidu and Gilgamesh seeking different meanings of life, both end up with immortality as their individualities are preserved in human civilization, whether willingly or not, despite they both chose death in nature in the end. However, the inquiry into the dynamic relationship between life and death requires understanding why death causes fear.

What triggers the fear of death is not the inorganic materials or the bacteria in scientific labs. People are fearful that life once again dissolves into the natural elements, parallel with the reason that we fear nature. Nature has the power to dissolve life, the same reason that Gilgamesh rejects Ishtar in transforming life into other forms in nature. Then the decay becomes “feculent.” We fear to see the faces that we were familiar with turning into something strange to us insofar that we can no longer recognize and understand.

As living beings, we see the stability constituted by human organs, *thumos*, and *nous* to disappear with *menos*. Meanwhile, the cultural world interprets the natural world with unnatural meanings and values. The constant changingness surrounds man in nature, and organic life is ultimately drawn into the “meaninglessness” of artificial “meaning.” The dissolving of organic

life at the same time damages the societal aspect of the life of the dead individuals. A dead man who loses the organic life can no longer perform his undone responsibilities or continue accomplishing social expectations. Ever since the death, a hero's life in society can only be constructed by others following their memories of him.

The instability of *psyche* in death requires the *nous* of others to confirm its meaning and value through the community collectively. Otherwise, the meaning of its life will drift into different people's *nous*, contributing to formulating different meanings in each *nous* that cannot come to converge. Therefore, society artificially creates the meaning of war that is represented through glory and honor so that there is a collective standard that the members can praise, creating a model that allows all members to follow. After death, an individual's life entirely relies on unstable memories of all kinds of community members. This threat in the Iliad is reflected by *psyche*'s inability to cross the gate to Hades without proper funerals.

An individual's death continues to threaten the living members of the community. The uninvited *psyche* makes its relatives nervous since *psyche* is still incapable of being understood (Iliad XXIII: 101). Although they looked identical in appearances, speeches, and behaviors to the actual individuals who once lived, when we approach them and hug them, they disappear like smoke (XXIII: 95-107; Odyssey XI: 204-214).

This drifting *psyche* stimulates and provokes the living people to share with death that their friends encountered. In the Iliad, when the message of the death of Patroclus spreads, the whole theme in that section is associated with death. Achilles denigrates and gives up on himself (Iliad XVIII: 23–) and even wants to end his own life (XVIII: 34,98). His actions are contagious to others in the community, including the servant women captured by Achilles and Patroclus,

Antilochos, the parents of Achilles, and other relatives in the family. The whole Acaios people share his pain, mourning, and crying for Patroclus' death. The relatives of the dead people also require others to act like themselves, showing the identical expression of love and friendship.

However, this demand for loyalty engenders the collective entity. Homer raises the debate of mourning the dead versus preserving the living strength, illuminating the possible threat brought by the dead individual of a collective entity. The conflict between Odysseys and Achilles about whether their troops should eat is a piece of clear evidence. Achilles at that time already managed some care for Patroclus' corpse and performed his mourning, yet he still wats his mother, Thetis, to promise that she will maintain Patroclus' body as will when Achilles is out seeking vengeance (XVIII: 343-355; XIX: 33-39). The maintenance of the corpse of Patroclus does not satisfy Achilles, however. He is seeking everyone standing the hunger and immediately starts the war with the Trojans, which causes the crisis for the collective entity (XIX: 209-213). Although it is empathetic, Achilles lacks *nous*. Odysseys stops Achilles and insists on the rules that the army must obey. The Myrmidons and Acaios must restore the ceremony to ally, accepting Agamemnon's gift, and make sacrifices to God (XIX: 238-265). Individuals who survived harmless battles should be seriously served with food to preserve abundant energy to fight the emery and assure their safety (XIX: 226-233). Despite knowing about it, Achilles still only concerns about his wrath, refusing to eat, and he might lose his life without Athena's ambrosia and nectar (XIX: 305-8, 352-355). The collective entity cannot expect to have someone like Odysseys prevent this crisis every time it occurs. Thus, it will require a more conventional way to deal with the death of heroes: public funerals and *ktereizein aethloisi*

4.

The Solution to Solve the Threats

The two solutions for the ancient people are public funerals and funeral games (*ktereizein aethloisi*). Gilgamesh calls for plants and animals for condolence (VIII: 14-17). The process of public funerals include mourning of the individuals who were close to the other individual passed away, the banquet where the last meal occurs between the living and the dead with sacrifices of the animals, the process of incineration that helps to escape from experiencing the natural process of decay of the body that diminishes the meaning of life for human beings, and the setting of the tomb that covered the body with stones and soil (XXIV: 797; XXIII: 256). The function of each process reminds the living that the person is already gone so that the living can return to their everyday life, making up for the spiritedness in part of us, and the individuality of the passed soul can be preserved and remembered by the community. However, by setting up a tomb, we also draw a clear line between life and death to feel a sense of safety in the living world.

The meaning of individual life can be distinguished between the organic (*thumos* and *menos*) and the social (perception and the formed *nous*), which corresponds with the two functions of funerals. To end the living's organic life, purifying and cleaning the dead body maintains the purest form of the corpse while it is still in the living world. The process of incineration is the fastest way to return to the natural world that is not cultural. This unsolvable conflict between nature and civilization is Hektor himself. To confirm the social meanings of the

dead through the process of mourning is the dealing-with of the social aspect of the dead people. Rather than mourning about what the dead people had accomplished while alive, what is being mourned is the death that causes the loss of the living. Once this relation that the living people have with the dead individual is broken, we no longer pay attention to it because there is no use-value anymore in relation to the dead individual. The meaning of the dead's life is confirmed through the living mourning the pain and disaster after losing him and confirming that the dead exists in the living's memories and sights after its absence. The presence of meaning appears in the absence of life.

Funeral also resolves the threat brought by the dead heroes to the collective entity and the closest living people of the heroes, reuniting the meaning between the dead and the cultural world (civilization) of the living. Everyone in this collective entity participating in the funeral is also an indication that people are willing to follow the standards and rules in society, confirming the existing social order. The social aspect of the dead is settled by tomb and tombstone. After the death, when asking about the individual, the tombstone tells the story of the dead. However, the tombstone alone is vulnerable in the way that ceases to stop the dead from coming to the living through dreams and meanings that leftover.

The most significant difference between heroes and ordinary people is that heroes treat glory and honor as the absolute and complete meaning of their lives. They represent the best people among the collective entity, and their sacrifices, along with their deaths, require more grand memorials to commemorate. Therefore, they need more people to witness their glory before death to continue spreading their stories to more collective entities from generation to generation.

The silent tomb is not enough for heroes. We need sacrificing heroes in society to set standards of what ordinary people should look up to. However, the sacrifices of heroes are artificial. Similarly, the concept of heroes is also artificial; but this does not mean it is meaningless of their deaths. What is the meaning of glory and honor? Are they artificial? At least Gilgamesh and Enkidu both give up on them. It is actually mortality that makes their lives meaningful for Glory (Iliad XII: 322-328). The threat brought by the death of heroes is more remarkable than ordinary people, and the damage is not enough to be fixed by funerals. The death of heroes requires more remedies to ease the influences that cause the loss of the community, along with the extension of the meaning of heroes and war.

In the form of winning the prize, people expand and consume the money and things of the heroes. As the members of the collective entity consume and suck on the contributions of the heroes, these prizes embodied the status and reputation of the heroes while they were alive. The prizes include clothes, animals, medals, slaves, and weapons (XXIII). Sometimes the prizes come from the friends of the heroes (XXIII: 548). The two ways of consuming the money of the dead include burning them all (XXII. 510) or used as prizes for funeral games. Both of them serve the function of making the living remember the dead. Through burning, the destruction of beautiful things itself makes people remember. In the form of giving a present, through prizes, it reminds the people who win the prizes of the dead that they owe the dead of these prizes that cannot be given back to the dead.

There is also an asymmetry of exchanges between prizes and endless honor. Prizes of the dead in exchange for the services provided by the living evokes a sense of guilt, a permanent debt. The physical economy of honor encourages them to fight. People who won the prizes must

tell the stories of the dead heroes when the winners talk about their victories. In this way, the dead heroes obtained the glory and honor they yearned for. An establishment of the mutual relationship between the dead heroes and the living winners based on glory comes to be. Funeral games provide further support for the affirmation of the existing values in society. The dominant principle in funeral games is the distribution of virtues, serving as the primary standard of distributing honors. Relying on the distribution of virtues as the dominating principle, it does not interfere with the authority of the hoariness and inheritance. At Patroclus's funeral, Achilles proposed that Agamemnon can win the prize without fighting, preventing the shaking of authority caused by loss. Achilles gives the prize to Nestor, offsetting the situation that Nestor could not share the prize by winning the game due to aging (XXIII. 616-623). A funeral game, to some extent, is like a Republic that the collective entity lives with daily routine, and it achieves self-mimicking of the collective entity as a part of the mechanism of self-purification.

A funeral game is the combination of game and ritual—it is like a game that produces the effect of division, distinguishing between the winner and loser. Meanwhile, it is like a ritual that functions with combinability that constructs an organic association between the competitors and the audience, the living and the dead, transforming the meanings of the heroes and the lives of the living people from the threats brought by dead heroes.

Myth enchants us into fundamental insights based on assumptions that are so basic, unquestioned, and unnoticed in our culture. The story in Homer and the Epic is about something and draws us toward something. As living beings, we see the stability of human organs, *thumos*, and *nous* disappears with *menos*. Meanwhile, the natural world erodes into the cultural world. The constant chanciness surrounds man in nature, and organic life is ultimately drawn into the

"meaninglessness" of artificial "meaning." Then inauthentic Achilles in Homer rejects the naturalness of life, whereas inauthentic Gilgamesh rejects the naturalness of death. They all fail to recognize themselves through the equal of Patroclus and Enkidu, fundamentally seeking for something that they themselves do not even know the nature and truth of what accounts for life and death. The meaning of our life is dependability on others. To remind the living about the death of that individual urges the living to return to its everyday life.

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ACADEMIC VITA

EDUCATION

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SELECTED RESEARCH

A Big Picture of Anthropocene

- ⌚ Explored anthropocene beginning with Gilgamesh in ancient philosophy to a larger worldview in understanding the relationship between human life and nature as experiments
- ⌚ Working on the academic writing of this honor thesis which will be published next year

Life Affirmation Through Transformation in Nietzsche and Zhuang Zi

- ⌚ Compared Nietzsche's concept on eternal return and Zhuang Zi's thought in the cycle of infinity through transformation for interpreting the meaning of life is at stake of its meaninglessness
- ⌚ Challenged the misconception that regards Nietzsche's philosophy as nihilism in an on-going conference paper

Expanded Close Reading on Excerpt from Thus Spoke Zarathustra

- ⌚ Investigated Zarathustra's speech on the three metamorphoses from Nietzsche's philosophical parable
- ⌚ Studied the movement of transformation in which the very structure of values, identities, and meanings change in the transformative force of one's life

Field of Resonance on How Institutions Think by Mary Douglas

- ⌚ Referred to works by economist Mancur Olson, Jon Elster, Emile Durkheim to examine Mary Douglas' point: at the extreme point of life conflicts with humanity, we could deeply delve into the contemplation of how institutions have conspicuous and subtle restraining power

The Psychological Treatments to Postpartum Depression and Maternal Parenting Self-efficacy to Social Collaboration of Toddlers

- ⌚ Examined the psychological research on literature reviews with accommodated experimental design of postpartum depression
- ⌚ Described the reflection on maternal parenting self-efficacy with personal feelings as a mother

Exploration of Love

- ⌚ Defined the concept of love in the field of personality psychology that understands love as a facet of the Big Five Personality Traits

Heidegger's Comments on Nietzsche's Philosophy Ideas

- ⌚ Detected Heidegger's critics on Nietzsche's philosophy and ontology, and his shift thinking and connection to the interpretation on Nietzsche

Philosophical Analysis on Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology"

- ⌚ Looked into the relations among nature, human and technology through Plato and Aristotelian philosophy
- ⌚ Figured out Kant's different assumptions on the existence in the world and supported Heidegger's views on technology

Locke and Hume's Personal Identity

- ⌚ Studied the definition and essence of personal identity raised by Locke and Hume respectively
- ⌚ Identified the loopholes in their arguments from a wide philosophical realm

Self-Overcoming to Live Life

- ⌚ Narrated my personal thinking inspired by Nietzsche and Zarathustra's believes in the core and eternity of self-overcoming in life

From Natural Teleology to Humanity as an End

- ⌚ Analyzed Kant's ideology on the historical development's unification between the conformity of law and purposiveness from natural teleology to humanity society

Kierkegaard's Belief in Three Stages of Life: Aesthetic, Ethical, and Religious

- Ⓟ Investigated Kierkegaard's major views from individual existence towards the future, between ethical and aesthetic, always either/or, faith in fear and trembling and despair

The Uncanny in The Sandman

- Ⓟ Interpreted Freud's critique on Hoffman's short story "*The Sandman*" in terms of psychoanalysis, appreciation of the aesthetics in "*The Uncanny*"

The Unreachable Law

- Ⓟ Conducted a close reading on the "*Before the Law*" by Kafka and his contemplates on the relational property between human beings and the law
- Ⓟ Elaborated on the temptation and the repelling nature of the law to prove its unreachability

The Great Wall of China as the Representation of Ideological Empire

- Ⓟ Discussed Kafka's message on the metaphorical relationship of building the Great Wall from rooted Western recognition in his work "*The Great Wall of China*"
- Ⓟ Unveiled the relationship between people and the Empire through the construction of the Great Wall from the perspective of the hidden Orientalism

The Answer to Life

- Ⓟ Composed a writing to reflect on my observation, feeling and thinking regarding the relations between individuals and society inspired by Sayaka Murata's "*Convenience Store Woman*" and Teju Cole's "*Open City*"
- Ⓟ Excavated the meaning to live as relational beings through stories of characters in these literatures

The Experience of Contemporary -- A Distanced Observation

- Ⓟ Scrutinized contemporary as an ahistorical experience that wanders through constant destruction and formation of the very structure of changeable ideologies in a collection of literary works

Comparison between Chinese Translation and English Translation on Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

- Ⓟ Illustrated the challenges and strategies in the Chinese and English language translation of Nietzsche's German philosophical poetic fiction "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*"
- Ⓟ Listed the genealogy of translating Nietzsche's work and compared each translation on Zarathustra's prologue in detail