

ENUMA ELISH & GENESIS 1-25

1. *ENUMA ELISH* (15')

A. Ask: What kind of narrative is this?

- i. A creation story; origin of the Babylonian cosmos
- ii. Takes place in the beginning,
- iii. This is also about the ascendancy of Marduk

B. ASK: Who are the main characters in this story?

- i. All the gods, but the two main ones are Tia-mat and Marduk

C. ASK: What happens in the story?

- i. Walk students through main points of the story.
- ii. The story opens in the beginning of time, when the two mythical seas Tiamat and Apsu mingled their waters together, thus creating the first gods. Then follow two narrative sections: first the battle between Apsu and the god Ea, and then the battle between Tiamat and Ea's son Marduk.
- iii. The two sections mirror one another, as Marduk's story parallels and expands his father's.
 1. Ea carries out the first truly creative act of the poem: he shapes Aps. – once a shapeless expanse of water – into a definite region of the world, making his corpse into a home in which Ea will dwell with his wife Damkina
- iv. The remainder of the text tells of Marduk's elevation to supreme kingship among the gods and his organization of the universe. Finally, Marduk is assigned fifty names, each accompanied by a role he is to play in the ongoing maintenance of world order
 1. Composed to cement Babylon's political supremacy = Gods' subjugation to Marduk signifies the other cities' subjugation to Babylon (**poetic of empire**, cfr. Inana crushing revolts)

2. GENDER (15')

A. **In groups of 3: How is gender depicted in each poem? Look for specific passages/language.**

- B. In the mid-to-late second millennium BCE, a radical shift takes place in gender relations in Babylonian and Assyrian culture
- i. Priestesses and goddesses are demoted, marginalized, and/or sexualized
 - ii. The religious sphere provides the clearest evidence for what was presumably a broader shift = tellingly, Enheduana's office of high priestess disappears
- C. Enheduana's poems and Enuma Elish belong to a time before and after this shift, respectively

3. GENESIS (5')

- A. Contextualize: this is a story that holds importance for certain faiths, but we will approach it as a literary work that reflects ways in which humans understand their relationship with the divine.
- B. Warm-up: ask the class
- i. Were you familiar with stories from Genesis? If so, which ones?
 - ii. Did you encounter anything that you did not expect?
 - iii. Did you run into any inconsistencies or changes in tone as you were reading?

4. CREATION STORIES (GN. 1-3) (30')

- A. Go over Gen. 1-2.3

- i. Order of creation (very logical)

Precreation	Day 1 Light	Day 2 Sky, water bodies	Day 3 Land, vegetation	Postcreation
	Day 4 Luminaries	Day 5 Birds, fish	Day 6 Land animals	

- ii. How is the creator presented and named? (God, a majestic being)
- iii. How is creation accomplished? ("God said")
- iv. Dwell on creation of humans (Gen. 1.26-21). ASK: What does this story tell us about humanity?
 1. "Our likeness"
 2. He created them in his image, both male and female (verse added to prose)
 3. Command to multiply and rule
 4. Vegetarian

B. Transition to 2:4-3:24

- i. Read 2:4-25 with the students. Stop to consider the following:
 1. Order of creation (here, humans are created first)
 2. How is the creator presented and named? (Lord, Lord God; anthropomorphic, caring)
 3. What does this passage tell us about God's relationship with humankind? Dwell on God's hands-on creation of humankind and the very intimate breathing into his nostrils.

C. Compare both creation stories

- i. Ask:
 1. What are some of the main differences between the first and second stories?
 2. What do the sequences of creation tell us about the concerns of each source?
- ii. Briefly introduce the Documentary Hypothesis and describe the main attribute of each source (use the board).
 1. P: Precise style, emphasis on order and priestly concerns (legal and cultic aspects), creator (God) is remote and non-anthropomorphic
 2. J: Vivid, concrete style; anthropomorphic God (make sure they understand anthropomorphic), uses YHWH (Lord) [sometimes grouped with Elohist source as JE]
- iii. Ask: based on our reading of Genesis, to which source would you attribute each story?
 1. Gen. 1-2:3 is attributed to the P source, and 2:4-3:24 to the JE source.

5. THE FALL (GEN. 3) (15')

A. Ask: Are human beings created equal in both stories? How is the relationship between male and female presented in both stories?

B. Go over Gen 3. Pay attention to:

- i. What does the snake say about eating the fruit?
- ii. Eve sees that the tree is good for food like other trees (2.9)
- iii. What changes after eating the fruit?
 1. Enlightenment: eyes are open, awareness of nakedness, making loincloths with fig leaves.
 2. Shame:
 - a. *Hiding from God (breakdown in relationship)*
 - b. *Displacement of guilt*

3. Punishment
 - a. *Snake has to crawl*
 - b. *Woman: Increase of childbearing pains: "... yet your desire shall be for your husband / and he shall rule over you" (3.16)*
 - c. *Man: Endless toil for food production*
4. Death
 - a. *This is interesting because God says to his court: "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (3.22)*
 - b. *Due to this anxiety, God kicks humankind out of the garden, so they no longer have access to the tree of life. "Knowledge" and immortality are incompatible.*
 - i. Other moments when God expresses anxiety about human being too powerful: 6.3, 11.6-8

6. CAT

- A. In pairs, students will discuss an assigned artwork. They should write down some keywords, passages, or insights from the class or the reading that can help us make sense of the artwork.
- B. Whole-class discussion (using PPT)