

The Manifestation of Inanna-Ishtar Mesopotamian Goddess in Paulo Coelho's Novel the Spy

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Abstract:

Mesopotamian myths occupy a crucial role in literature. It's not less than Greek or Roman myths. This study concentrates on the famous Mesopotamian Goddess Inanna- Ishtar in the work of Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho's The Spy. This Goddess is seen from very different perspectives; politics, love, fertility, wildness, and as female character articulates the ideology of feminism. The goal is to actively participate in the discourse that govern, describe, and define life. The role of women, which makes up reality, has the power to both influence and recreate the world. It reinforces the argument that there is a feminine dimension, which is seen as a force against patriarchy. The common denominator between Ishtar and Mata Hari -the heroine of this novel- is that both of them, to some extent, have equivalent life. Both of them being insulted and idolized. The vulgar, wild and political role both played is the cornerstone of this research. The research also illustrates both artistical and political utilization of those two characters. The research begins with an introductory section to "feminism" then using analytic argumentation to clarify Ishtar's presence in the novel The Spy. The research is then concluded based on the study's findings. Additionally, the text makes an effort to critically show how a male-female ties is really used in the context of The Spy. The study assumes that the character Mata Hari is clearly reflected in the Mesopotamian Myth Ishtar.

Keywords: Mata Hari, feminism, myth, Mesopotamia, Paulo Coelho, Ishtar.

Introduction:

Feminism may be defined as a set of social and political concepts, the most significant of which is the acknowledgment that gender disparity is still a major issue in society and that an active agenda to address is required (Selden et al., 2015). It entails an intellectual commitment to attaining gender equality, and it often regards all aspects of culture, particularly literature, as an argumentative orientation. As a result, feminist literary theory aligns with feminism's goals, concentrating on literary culture as a possible site of struggle and a method of ultimate transformation (Kowaleski-Wallace, 1997). Feminism as a word has its root in the French word "feminine" which means "the principle that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men" (Labensky et al., 2000, P. 522). In "The New Definition of Feminism" Elizabeth Kelly (2005), points out that "feminism means resisting oppression, freedom of choice, and freedom from gender pressures" (p. 233). The word "feminist" refers to "scholars who are exploring the connections between women and language" (KowaleskiWallace, 1997, p. 833).

Feminists address unconsciousness, biology, experience, discourse, social conditions, subjectivity, and sexuality in order to confront discrimination against women in society (Selden et al., 2015). Liesbet Van Zoonen affirms that feminism has "a double edge of being both an interest group struggling for social and legal changes beneficial to women and of challenging cultural routines concerning femininity and gender" (1994, p. 152). Deborah Cameron assumes that "men and women are perceived within a given society is predicated on a gender hierarchy in which differential values are assigned to the qualities, behaviour, and experiences of males and females" (1998, p. 16). Rosemary Hennessy observes that "feminism is a matter of the differential civil rights that are accorded to males and females as individual members of a given society" (1993, p. 2).

Julia Kristeva devotes significant essays to the subject of feminism: "Women's Time" "Stabat Mater" through which she separates the feminist movement into three distinct generations. Feminists in the first wave strived to

be on a sufficient scale with men in terms of social responsibilities and rights

"in its beginnings, the women's movement, as the struggle of suffragists and of

existential feminists, aspired to gain a place in linear time as the time of project

and history” (Kristeva et al., 1981, p. 18). The political demands of women include the fights for equal pay, labor, and influence in social institutions (Kristeva et al., 1981). The second generation of feminists developed “after May 1968” (Kristeva & Moi, 1986, p. 42). According to Kristeva, the second wave of feminism situates itself outside the linear time of identities “by demanding recognition of an irreducible identity, without equal in the opposite sex and, as such, exploded, plural, fluid, in a certain way non-identical” (Kristeva & Moi, 1986, p. 46). Second-wave feminism’s primary focus is changing to the politics of reproduction, women’s ‘experience,’ sexual ‘diversity,’ and sexuality, as both a source of oppression and something to be celebrated (Selden et al., 2015, p. 119). The third wave feminism refers to its predecessors and the struggle for women’s sociocultural appreciation is unavoidably its primary concern. This wave appears to regard itself as belonging to a different generation in terms of a conception of its own identity. It primarily interests in the uniqueness of female psychology and its symbolic manifestations. Western civilization cultivates a set of binary opposition between masculine and feminine that mimics the binary opposition between females and males. Throughout history, the western world instigates a disparity in the binary division of male and female as subject and object relationships. Man has embodied the greatest value, the dominant status in the relation between the sexes. The male embodies the productive process of the subject. In contrast, the woman’s image involves passiveness and serves as the object that is formed and desired (Wittig, 1986).

Patriarchal culture passively instigates the notion of a submissive woman

who is in silence, associates with the prevailing ideology of subjugation,

submission and inferiority. Woman's oppression is derived from male

phallogocentric language. Male dominance of language is effective conduction for

patriarchy of ruling and abusing women.

(Gilbert & Gubar, 1979).

Research Problem

Based on the provided context, the problem highlighted in this research is how the primary character, Mata Hari, who performs a dual role in her life as a dancer and a spy girl, represents the Mesopotamian myth Ishtar. Along with the story, Mata Hari develops artistic and political dimensions. The innovative research design occurs in its use of the myth Ishtar with Mata-Hari, the heroine of the novel *The spy*.

Research Objectives

This study is steered with the goal of demonstrating myth utilization between Dutch dancer Margaretha Zelle (Mata Hari) who is a self-determining woman living her life in the background of First World War, and Ishtar.

Method

utilizing a descriptive qualitative method, which examines how the occurrence of words or phrases along the novel relate to one another to establish a clear meaning is reflected with Ishtar. Since the study is focused on a literary work, namely a novel, qualitative research is a well-considered theory for implementing the research. This study uses phrases and quotations from books, journals, and online sources for investigation. It needs to be done in order to seek out supporting evidence and to elaborate on it as well. The study progresses in the following phases, which include attentively reading the novel, choosing, and gathering data in the form of exposition and discussing feminism theory. In the conclusion, this study will reveal how Mata Hari -the heroine of this novel- and Inanna-Ishtar are on the same side of demanding rights.

Analysis

Paulo Coelho, the well-known author of *The Alchemist* and *Adultery*, brings to life one of antiquity's most enigmatic woman: Mata Hari, the "beau of the great diva of the time." (Coelho, 2016, p.29). Mata Hari was homeless when she arrived in Paris. She became the most prominent woman in the city in just a few of months. She dazzles audience with her dancing, and as a courtesan, she captivates the most powerful and wealthy men. But because of her lifestyle, Mata Hari was suspected of espionage at war.

She was detained and suspected of spying at her accommodation on the Champs Elysees in 1917. The Spy is told in Mata Hari's voice through her last letter: is an intriguing story of a lady who had bravery to negotiate a settlement and who ultimately paid the price.

The eldest Mesopotamian goddess, Inanna, was associated with strength, beauty, confrontation, justice, and love. Initially revered as "Inanna" in Sumer, she was eventually honored as "Ishtar" by the three principal civilizations of Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. She was known as the "Queen of Heaven" and served as the patron goddess of Uruk's Eanna temple, which served as her primary worship center. Her most extravagant emblems included the lion and the eight-pointed star, and she was associated with the planet Venus.

A major icon in contemporary culture is Inanna. Inanna is cited by the writer and historian Anne O. Nomis as a founding member of the dominatrix archetype; she is portrayed as a powerful woman who dominates men and gods. The recent interpretation of Inanna has drawn criticism from scholar Paul Thomas, who claims that she retroactively imposes modern gender norms on the ancient Sumerian tale by demonstrating Inanna as a wife and mother—roles the ancient Sumerians never assigned to her—while ignoring the more masculine aspects of her cult, especially her associations with violence and warfare (Pryke, 2017, pp. 193, 195).

It has been suggested that Inanna's name derives from the Sumerian word *nin-an-ak*, which means "Lady of Heaven" (Collins 1994, pp. 110–111). According to Assante (2003), Inanna's cult was very small in the pre-Sargonic period but swiftly rose to become one of the most commonly worshiped gods in the ancient Sumerian pantheon under Sargon's rule. Her major cult center was the Eanna temple at Uruk, where her name means "House of Heaven." She had temples scattered around, with the most significant one being at Ur. According to Tammi J. Schneider, Sumerian Inanna is regarded as Ishtar in the Akkadian realm. Inanna also becomes difficult to

distinguish from Ishtar since the two were tied quite early in Mesopotamian history. These two mysterious characters have double names; Innana is the second name of Ishtar, and Margaretha Zelle is the other name of Mata Hari.

Jacobsen (1976), accomplishes his subtle argument of the goddess by claiming that Inanna “has become truly all woman and of infinite variety”, (p. 143). More lately, the French Assyriologist J. Bottero (1987) has stressed the bipolarity and eccentricity of the goddess’s association with the prostitute, pp. 165-183). Mata Hari affirms this idea when she has said: “Yes, I was a prostitute—if by that you mean someone who receives favors and jewelry in exchange for affection and pleasure” (Coelho, 2016, p.24).

This particular aspect of the goddess, who was much more than just the goddess of reproduction, of love and battle, and the Venus star, is revealed via prayers, hymns, stories, festivals, and cultic figures. When Mata Hari is in her last journey in the prison she is asked if she is released and achieved her freedom would do the same procedures of her old life, she says: “If God gave you a second chance, would you do anything differently? I said yes, but really, I do not know. All I know is that my current heart is a ghost town, one populated by passions, enthusiasm, loneliness, shame, pride, betrayal, and sadness.” (Coelho, 2016, p. 22-23). She describes her own life as a challenger, rather than being a victim “I am a woman who was born at the wrong time and nothing can be done to fix this. I don’t know if the future will remember me, but if it does, may it never see me as a victim, but as someone who moved forward with courage, fearlessly paying the price she had to pay” (Coelho, 2016, p.23).

In the moment where she makes her marriage proposal to Gilgamesh, Inanna-Ishtar is portrayed as a lustful, forceful goddess who becomes jealous and angry when the hero rejects her. The scriptures regularly refer to the goddess' hypersexuality, particularly in the Gilgamesh Epic. Mata Hari has three different names so that she hides her personality. Margaretha zelle is her original name, Mata Hari is her second name she acquires, finally H21 is her codename from German consul.

The same in the novel Margaretha Zelle attracts to Rudolf MacLeod, an officer in the Dutch army who seeks a wife, after very short time they got married “I began reading the classified ads in the newspaper ... Rudolf MacLeod, an officer in the Dutch army of Scottish descent, currently stationed in Indonesia, seeks young bride. There was my salvation! Officer. Indonesia. Strange seas and exotic worlds” (Coelho, 2016, p.30).

Despite being a wife and mother, Inanna-Ishtar's mythology does not place much value on either role. She does not engage in activities typically associated with women, such as childcare and weaving. Because of her duties as a prostitute and a warrior, the goddess is cast out of the domestic sphere of women and into the extra-domestic realm of the former as well as into the public sphere of men who pursue fame and power (Meyers, 1987, p. 209). In the novel, Mata Hari indulges in her own life apart from her daughter. She pays little attention to her daughter so that she finally loses her. Mata Hari, loses her daughter in Indonesia, after catastrophic life. Ishtar had a little cult before to Sargon of Akkad's conquest, (Wolkstein&Kramer,1983). She acquired temples all throughout Mesopotamia during the post-Sargonic period and rose to become one of the most revered gods in the Sumerian pantheon. The worship of Inanna/Ishtar, which has been linked to a number of sex rituals (Wolkstein&Kramer,1983, p. xviii).

She was especially revered by the Assyrians, who exalted her to become the supreme goddess in their pantheon, placing her above their own personal god Ashur. More than any other Sumerian deity, Inanna frequently appears in myths (Penglase, 1994, pp. 42–43). In several of her mythologies, she usurps the spheres of power from other deities. She was thought to have taken the mes, which represented both the good and bad aspects of civilization, from Enki, the god of wisdom. She was also thought to have displaced the sky deity An from the Eanna temple.

Mata Hari has renowned life which contribution among many different European countries such as her native Dutch land, France, Germany and England, that she involves in famous dancing clubs in London, Paris, and Amsterdam. For defying her rule, Ishtar demolished Mount Ebih. She then turned her wrath on the servant Shukaletuda after he had sexually assaulted her while she was sleeping. Ishtar begs Gilgamesh to be her consort in the original Akkadian translation of the Gilgamesh Epic. When he declines, she releases the Bull of Heaven, which leads to Enkidu's demise and Gilgamesh's complying with struggle with mortality. The same events happen to Mata Hari in her earlier life when she was sixteen, she raped by the school master “The school principal, who raped me when I was sixteen” (Coelho, 2016, p.28).

The most well-known myth involving Inanna/Ishtar is the one about her journey from Kur, the underworld of Ancient Mesopotamia. In this myth, Inanna/Ishtar makes an attempt to subdue her older sister Ereshkigal, the supreme leader of the underworld, but is as opposed sentenced to death for hubris by the seven jurors of the underworld. Three days later, Ninshubur appeals to all the gods to send Inanna back, but they all reject her request except Enki, who sends two sexless creatures to retrieve Inanna. However, the Galla, the underworld's guardians, pull Inanna's spouse Dumuzid down there in her place.

They then take Inanna out of the underworld. Dumuzid finally allowed her to go back to heaven for half of the year, while his sister Geshtinanna stays in the underworld for the other half, culminating in the seasonal cycle. This scenario comes in alignment with the novel when Mata-Hari retails “the clothing was formed of veils layered one on top of the other. I removed the first one and no one seemed to pay much notice. But when I removed the second, then the third, people began to exchange glances” (Coelho, 2016, p.63). Suspension arrives its final peak when Mata-Hari tells her experience, “by the fifth veil, the audience was totally focused on what I was doing, caring little about the dance but wondering how far I would go. When I got to the sixth veil, I went over to the Shiva statue, simulated an orgasm, and cast myself to the ground while removing the seventh and final veil” (Coelho, 2016, p. 64).

The religion of Ishtar was long supposed to entail holy prostitution. In several tales, Jeffrey Cooley has proposed, Inanna's motions may match with the changing positions of the planet Venus in the sky (Nemet-Nejat 1998, p. 203). The Sumerian hymn Inanna and Utu has an etiological tale telling how Inanna became the goddess of sex. Inanna knows nothing about sex at the start of the hymn, so she begs her brother Utu to take her to Kur (the Sumerian underworld) so she can eat the fruit of a tree that grows there, which would disclose to her all the mysteries of sex. Utu agrees, and Inanna consumes the fruit and gains wisdom in Kur. The hymn contains the same motif as the narrative of Enki and Ninhursag, as well as the later Biblical account of Adam and Eve (Scurlock, 2014).

Inanna requests permission from An, the Sumerian deity of the skies, to demolish Mount Ebih. An warns Inanna “not to assault the mountain, but she disregards his warning and attacks and destroys Mount Ebih” (Kramer 1963, p. 174). The phrase “destroyer of Kur” is employed as one of Inanna's epithets in Sumerian poetry. Goddess Inanna notices his single poplar tree and decides to relax beneath its

branches. Shukaletuda removes her clothing and rapes Inanna as she sleeps. When she wakes up and discovers she has been raped, she becomes enraged and vows to bring her assailant to justice. In a flash of wrath, Inanna wreaks havoc on the Earth, turning water into blood. Shukaletuda, fearful for his life, begs his father for advice on how to avoid Inanna's anger. His father advises him to hide in the city, amid the crowds, where he can presumably fit in. Inanna explores the hills of the East for her assailant but is unsuccessful.

She then unleashes a series of storms and barricades all roads to the city, but she still can't find Shukaletuda, so she begs Enki for assistance, threatening to abandon her temple in Uruk if he doesn't. Enki agrees, and Inanna soars "across the sky like a rainbow" over the sky. Inanna eventually finds Shukaletuda, who makes lame justifications for his crime against her. Inanna rejects these justifications and murders him (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, p. 141).

Inanna bangs on the gates of the underworld, seeking admission. When the gatekeeper Neti inquires as to why she has come, Inanna responds that she has come to attend the burial rituals of Gugalanna, the "husband of my elder sister Ereshkigal" (Kramer 1961, p. 66). Neti informs Ereshkigal, who instructs him: "Bolt the seven gates of the underworld. Then, one by one, open each gate a crack. Let Inanna enter. As she enters, remove her royal garments" (Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983, p. 14).

Perhaps Ereshkigal is suspicious because of Inanna's improper burial attire, as well as Inanna's pompous demeanour. Neti, following Ereshkigal's orders, informs Inanna that she may enter the first gate of the underworld, but she must surrender her lapis lazuli measuring rod. When she inquires as to why, she is informed, "It's just the ways of the underworld." She complies and goes through. Inanna walks through seven gates, each of which removes an item of clothing or jewelry she was wearing at the outset of her voyage, depriving her of her power. She is nude when she appears in front of her sister (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, p. 20).

The gatekeeper (name unknown in the Akkadian version) rushes to inform Ereshkigal of Ishtar's arrival. Ereshkigal advises him to allow Ishtar in, but to "treat her according to the ancient rites." The gatekeeper allows Ishtar to enter the underworld one gate at a time. Ishtar is compelled to remove one piece of clothes at each gate. She is nude as she eventually goes through the seventh gate. In a fit of wrath, Ishtar attacks Ereshkigal, but Ereshkigal orders her servant Namtar to confine Ishtar and unleash sixty illnesses against her (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983, pp. 127-135).

Inanna becomes a prominent character in modern feminist thought because she appears in the male-dominated Sumerian pantheon yet is equally, if not more, powerful than the male deities she appears with. In her book *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir claims that modern society has ignored Inanna and other great female goddesses from antiquity in favor of male deities:

I don't represent prostitutes—that would end my career. It's true that I've had to explain to one or two of my clients why I had a Mata Hari poster in my office. And you know what I said? That what you do is a retelling of a Sumerian myth in which the goddess Inanna goes to the forbidden world. She must pass through seven gates; at each, there waits a guardian, and, to pay her passage, she removes an article of clothing. (Coelho, 2016, p.84).

According to Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Inanna was a "marginal figure" in Sumerian religion, embodying the "socially unacceptable" paradigm of the "undomesticated, unattached woman." Johanna Stuckey has argued against this notion, citing Inanna's significance in Sumerian religion and her wide range of powers, neither of which appear to match the notion that she was considered "marginal" (Dalley 1989, pp. 109-111). The political role takes place through Mata's traveling to Germany. "German soldiers took the stage and said that all performances in concert halls were canceled until further notice." (Coelho, 2016, p. 113). "You need to leave or you'll be arrested. Lucky you're a citizen of a neutral country—that's where you should go immediately." (Coelho, 2016, p.114). Suspicion has linked with her since she carries three names: Her original name Maregreta Zelle, then Mata Hari and finally her codename H21. Although she didn't confess: "As someone who has access to the government's inner circle. The word he was trying to say, but didn't have the courage to voice, was "spy." Something I would never do in all my life." (Coelho, 2016, p. 118).

Conclusion

The common denominator between Ishtar and Mata-Hari is that both stands for Eros due to their adventure along their lives and Ares who represents god of war since these two heroines have political roles. Mata-Hari takes her political part in the cold war. Both are worshiped via people whom they communicate with. For example, Ishtar is an extraordinarily prominent goddess in ancient Mesopotamian beliefs, and she is highly revered. She possesses a plenty of adrenal vigor, passion, and a strong personality. She possesses the valor of God of War and the compassion of Eros, as well as brutality, avarice, and debauchery. These characteristics coalesce to make her a strong goddess. The failure of Mata-Hari's vengeance demonstrates the deterioration of women's social position in actual life. Women's status in society constantly remains a significant topic for women's advancement, and they are always through a dynamic and complicated transition process. Similarly, women's social standing in the ancient civilization are continually changing, as evidenced by religious mythology.

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ظهور إلهة بلاد ما بين النهرين إنانا-عشتار في رواية باولو كويلو الجاسوسة

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الخلاصة

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الأسطورة الرافدينية عشتار وتتبع أثرها في رواية الجاسوسة للروائي البرازيلي باولو كويلو. تظهر هذه الرواية تأثر الروائي بأساطير بلاد الرافدين حيث تحاكي هذه الرواية من خلال بطلتها ماتا هاري الاسطورة عشتار.

تحتل أساطير بلاد ما بين النهرين دورًا حاسمًا في الأدب. إنها ليست أقل من الأساطير اليونانية أو الرومانية. تركز هذه الدراسة على آلهة بلاد ما بين النهرين الشهيرة إنانا عشتار في رواية الجاسوسة للروائي البرازيلي باولو كويلو. يُنظر إلى هذه الإلهة من وجهات نظر مختلفة جدًا؛ السياسة، والحب، والخصوبة، والوحشية، وكشخصية أنثوية تعبر عن أيديولوجية الحركة النسائية. الهدف هو تحقيق المشاركة الفعالة في الخطابات التي تتحكم في الحياة وتحددها وتميزها. إن دور المرأة الذي يشكل الواقع هو العامل المحتمل للتأثير على العالم وإعادة صياغته. القاسم المشترك بين عشتار وماتا هاري -بطلة هذه الرواية- هو أن كليهما، إلى حد ما، لهما نفس الحياة. كلاهما يتعرضان للإهانة والتأليه. إن الدور المبتذل والوحشي والسياسي الذي لعبه كلاهما هو حجر الزاوية في هذا البحث حيث يوضح الاستخدام الفني والسياسي لهاتين الشخصيتين. تبدأ الدراسة بمقدمة مختصرة عن "النسوية" ثم ينتقل المنهج إلى توضيح حضور عشتار في رواية الجاسوسة تحليليا. وبعد ذلك ختم البحث بالنتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة. علاوة على ذلك، ومن خلال هذا الفحص، تحاول المقالة أن توضح بشكل نقدي الاستخدام الحقيقي للعلاقة بين الذكر والأنثى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ماتا هاري، إنانا عشتار، النسوية، الأسطورة، بلاد ما بين النهرين.