

The Portrayal of Ishtar in Ludmila Zeman's *Revenge of Ishtar* (1993) and Christopher Moore's *Ishtar and Tammuz: A Babylonian Myth of the Seasons* (1996)

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Abstract:

Ishtar the main female goddess in Mesopotamia in ancient time, her name has an echo in different cultures around the world. Ishtar is the goddess of love, sex and war, she was famous for her contradictory and complexity of her character. Ishtar's popularity is not limited to adults for there are many authors who retold her stories to children. In this research, two children's adaptations are studied in details; Ludmila Zeman's *The Revenge of Ishtar* (1993), which is based on Ishtar's account with Gilgamesh in the Great Epic of Gilgamesh and Christopher Moore's *Ishtar and Tammuz: A Babylonian Myth of the Seasons* (1996) based on the Mesopotamian literary work *The Descent of Inanna*. Both adaptations were selected to study Ishtar's portrayal in children's literature by comparing and contrasting her description within two different storylines adapted to children compared to the original myths. The researchers concluded that although both Zeman and Moore's adaptations skilfully portrayed the complexity of Ishtar character as inherited in Mesopotamian mythology, Zeman's adaptation is more suitable for children.

Keywords: Dumuzi Gilgamesh, Inanan, Mesopotamian mythology, the queen of Heavens.

1. Introduction

Mesopotamian female deities are frequently symbolic leaders of cities. They may join monarchs into battles, on other cases, they may serve as their sexual partners, supporting royalty in both ways. Many of the major Babylonian towns have their own rites, and great property is maintained in their names, such as animals, buildings, and real estate, silver and gold treasure. They actually have their own staff, which include managers and slaves. The principal goddesses are equal to their male counterparts in all of these respects ([Leick,2010,p.319](#)). Mesopotamian goddesses have personalities enriched with ancient characteristics and epithets, for example some of them are personified as the Mother Goddesses' primal functions like Ninhursag and Tiamat. (Haarmann& Marler,2008, 52). There are other goddesses that personify natural functions such as, Ereshkigal, the goddess the land of the dead. Mesopotamian goddesses was responsible not only for the life cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, but also for Prophecy, wisdom, judgment, justice, war, and love. (Haarmann and Marler, 2008,p. 51) The goddess Inanna (Akkidian: Ishtar), being the most important and the most popular goddess of Mesopotamia land (Haarmann& Marler,2008, 51) will be taken as an example of Mesopotamian goddesses portrayal in children's literature. Ishtar is usually portrayed as having double personality and some have attributed this exceptional duality to the blending of the Sumerian Inanna with the Akkadian Ishtar. However, all of her paradoxical characteristics, as well as aspects of both love and violence, occurred in both legendary traditions ([Massey, 2015, p. 18](#)). Originally, Inanna was a Fertility Deity. She noticed a shift in her personality over time. As Ishtar the Akkadian, she assumed a more commanding position as the Goddess of Love (Haarmann& Marler,2008, 51).She grew into a more complicated

character, surrounded by death and destruction in mythology, a goddess of paradoxical implications; happiness and sorrow, fair play and hatred, fire quenching and forces fire. Her popularity was global in the ancient Middle East, and she most likely incorporated a number of local deities at various places of devotion. In later mythology, she was renowned as the Queen of the Universe, possessing the abilities of An, Enki and Enlil (Britannica Educational Publishing, 2014).

The aim of this research is to study the portrayal of Ishtar in children's literature as representative of Mesopotamian civilization in children's mythology. In addition to that, the research aimed at analyzing the accuracy of her portrayal by comparing and contrasting the portrayal of her character along two different story lines in children's literature compared to her portrayal in the original Mesopotamian mythology. Finally, the research aimed discussion and analyzing the reasons for deleting and changed some details in children's adaptations.

Although many authors rewrote Ishtar's story in an appropriate manner for children, few meet the criteria like *Ludmila Zeman The Revenge of Ishtar (1993)* and *Christopher Moore's Ishtar and Tammuz: A Babylonian Myth of the Seasons (1996)*. Both Zeman and Moore's adaptations will be taken as examples for drawing the complexity of Ishtar's character as portrayed in children's literature. Each of the two children's adaption will be studied in details starting with a brief account of the author, a summary of the original Mesopotamian myth, a detailed summary of the children's adaptation then a full analysis of Ishtar's character portrayal in that adaptation.

1.2. The Goddess Ishtar (Innana)

Ishtar was the goddess of love, war, and fertility (Monaghan, 2010, p. 25). She one of the major Goddesses of Mesopotamian Pantheon and the most significant Female goddess in all ancient Mesopotamia's time. Scholars have described the goddess as "Goddess of "Infinite Variety," "Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," ambiguous and contradictory, complex and conflicting" (Monaghan, 2010, p19). She was popular in different cities in Mesopotamian lands having different names. The origin of this goddess came from Sumer which was known as Inanna (derived from the Sumerian name Nin Ana(k) " the Queen of heaven"). The two deities grew so intertwined that researchers now refer to them as Inanna-Ishtar. In the Assyrians region, Inanna had all but vanished, but Ishtar was still widely recognized, which make the name Ishtar more popular today (Monaghan, 2010, p19-21).

As to the goddess's family, she was the daughter of An/Anu, the deity of sky and the supreme god in other traditions, where her father was Nanna-Suen/Sin the moon god and the sun god Utu/Shamash was her brother. In other traditions, the powerful god Enlil or the wisdom deity Enki/Ea was her father. She have an older sister named Ereshkigal, the goddess of the underworld. According to most traditions, Ishtar did not have a permanent divine husband, but her bridegroom was the vanishing deity Dumuzi. In one extremely old myth, however, Ishtar was the wife of the sky deity An/Anu and hence was linked with the earth goddess Ki/Antum. One of her famous title was the "Great Mother, Although she was not mainly a mother, she had three kids who were minor deities in some beliefs (Monaghan, 2010, p,22 -23).

Ishtar was the pantheon's leader in the northern Babylonian kingdom of Akkad. She was a complicated and, at times, conflicted goddess. She was shown as a prolific mother with her big

breasts outstretched, yet she was also aggressive and destructive. She was a warrior and at the same time she was a wild lover. Ishtar, like Inanna, adored a vegetation deity who died and was resurrected and went into the underworld to save him. The texts infer, but do not declare clearly, that Ishtar was motivated by her wish to release her beloved Dumuzi. But Dumuzi (sometimes transliterated as Tammuz) stayed in the realm of death, and each spring the goddess gained a new partner. The moon was governed by Ishtar and she ruled over the morning and evening stars as well representing her feminist's warlike passionate forces. She is portrayed riding her chariot of seven lions before venturing out to kill animals or humans. Women worshiped her as "glad-eyed Ishtar of desire, the goddess of yearning. She was known as "Harimtu", "harlot of heaven" and she was portrayed dress as a "prostitute" (Monaghan,2014,p.53). She was known by various titles, the most common:

Innana -Ishtar enjoyed many epithets,"Queen of Heaven Earth" being the most common.Others included "Lady of Battle," "Amazement of the Land" "Lady Who Ascends into the Heavens," "Heroic Woman,""Ornament of Heaven," "Maiden," and often simply "the Woman."... she was often identified by ... Ishtar of Arbela and Ishtar of Nineveh. (Monaghan, 2010, p. 24).

In the Bible, Ishtar was referred to as " the Whore of Babylon"(Cervantes,2021), and in the book of Jeremiah she was known as the queen of heaven(Allen, 2016). According to the text, she was supposed to be responsible for both good and evil things in life. Her worship was popular among Jews, who also are the cult of Yahweh, their God as depicted in the Bible(Smile,2022). The term Easter which is a pagan festival was taken from the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, In reality, the word Ishtar is the same as the name Astarte, which is referred to in the Old Testament as Ashtaroth (Swaggart, 2015,p.336). The bible mentioned also Ishtar in the ritual lamentations of her beloved Tammuz, the Babylonian god.(Prkye, 2017, p.194).

Ishtar appeared in many poems in the ancient Mesopotamian, some of the goddess's more well-known stories are the Akkadian version of "Inanna and Enki", "Inanna and Ebih", and "Inanna and Shukalletuda," and in "*The Descent of Innana to the underworld.*" There are numerous tales in which she appears in, like the Sumerian Gilgamesh,"Enkidu and the Netherworld", and subsequently, the epic Akkadian masterpiece "The Epic of Gilgamesh". (Penglase, 2003, p. 13).

Ludmila Zeman's *Revenge of Ishtar* retells the story of Ishtar's revenge from Gilgamesh because of his refusal of her love offer. Christopher Moore's *Tammuz: A Babylonian Myth of The Seasons* retells Ishtar's descent to the underworld and her account with Tammuz, thus retelling of two different stories with Ishtar as the main character in different settings, conflicts and plots.

2. Ludmila Zeman

Ludmila Zeman is a Czech-Canadian animator, artist, and author/illustrator of children's books. Zeman inspired her works from the folk tradition of the Middle East for two trilogies of picture books. The first, is the legend of Gilgamesh which is a retelling of the ancient Mesopotamian: *Gilgamesh the King*(1991),*The Revenge of Ishtar* (1993), and *The Last Quest of Gilgamesh*(1995).The final book in the trilogy won the 1995 Governor General's Award for Children's Illustration. Zeman's trilogy gained a wide popularity as a literary work for children

about a famous Mesopotamian epic and is listed as the main source for children's about the history of Mesopotamia (Rosow, 2005 ;Tami C. Al-Hazza, 2008) (culminating project for the school year).

2.1. *The Revenge of Ishtar (1993)*

Zeman based her story on a part of the Epic of Gilgamesh. The epic presented Gilgamesh's life and his adventures with his friend Enkidu. Gilgamesh is portrayed as very handsome as well as very strong and powerful. He and his friend were able to kill the forest's monster Humbaba. The goddess Ishtar, the god of love and war the daughter of the god Enu, appeared seeing Gilgamesh's handsomeness, she asked him to marry her. He rejected her offer, reminding her of what she had done to her lovers. Ishtar felt humiliated, so she asked her father to give her the bull of heaven to avenge Gilgamesh. But the two strong friends were able to kill the bull, Ishtar had been insulted for the second time. The gods were upset from Gilgamesh and Enkidu and decided to punish them for killing the divine creature, by killing Enkidu.

According to Zeman's adaptation for children, the city of Uruk was in peace and it flourish under the rule of Gilgamesh, who learned from Enkidu how to be human and care about his people. Gilgamesh worked to make Uruk a great city, he directed building houses and luxurious temples. The people of Uruk were gathered at night, playing and listening to Shamhat songs. Shamhat was loved by all the people of the Uruk, she was the one who brought Enkidu and peace to the city. Yet one day the city was attacked by a monster called Humbaba, that caused destruction and killed many people one of them Shamhat. Both Gilgamesh and Enkidu, after a long journey, managed to kill Humbab. The goddess Ishtar appeared, she told Gilgamesh that she sent the wind to help him and she ordered him to marry her but he refused. She tried to tempt him with gold and wealth but she failed, she felt insulted and rode off in anger and fury. While Gilgamesh and Enkidu reached Uruk as heroes, the sky opened and Ishtar appeared with the bull of heaven to revenge from Gilgamesh. The bull was huge, his hoofs smashed the buildings and his snore was as an earthquake. The people felt fear and panic, no one could stop it or stand in its face, only Enkidu managed to get close. He caught his tail and pulled the bull back, Gilgamesh swung his sword and killed it. Enkidu cut the tail and threw it at Ishtar, she could not believe what she was seeing, and her scream cut the skies as she saw Gilgamesh killing the bull. She was insulted for the second time and she decided to plot her revenge from Gilgamesh and hurt him. Ishtar sent illness to Enkidu and the death of Enkidu was the result. Gilgamesh mourned his friend and built him a tomb. At night, Shamhat came as a bird to take Enkidu's spirit to the underworld, Enkidu blamed her for bringing him to the city to die and told her that he was happy in the forest. Shamhat told him he gained a lot by coming to the city; the lasting love of the people of Uruk and a great friendship, then she took his body and flew away. Gilgamesh was alone again, haunted by the idea of death that frightened him so he decided to find a way to destroy death by seeking the secret of immortality.

2. 2. Analysis of Zeman's Ishtar :

Zeman did not miss a detail in introducing Mesopotamian civilization through Ishtar's Revenge, one can easily see encyclopedic account, the story and illustration, of Sumerian civilization starting with the oldest form of religion incarnated by the goddess Ishtar along with the first form of writing, the cuneiform, moving to the daily life of Sumerians, their great achievements

and inventions, buildings (the great wall of Uruk, Ishtar's gate, temples, palaces, houses), clothes and accessories (detailed illustrations of men and women), musical instruments (the golden harp), and many more. Zeman has skillfully illustrated Ishtar portraying her as woman with human body and legs of bird, and she appeared with wings in some places in the story. Zeman's adaption of such physical appearance for Ishtar was not absurd but she depended on historical evidence, because Ishtar was linked with birds and she appeared in some inscriptions with bird legs and wings (Monaghan, 2010, p.23 24). Zeman depicted Ishtar sitting on her chariot that was driven by four winged horses, and the way she sat reflected her powerful position. Zeman portrayed Ishtar with a long curly black hair wearing a crown on her head. She was wearing a long dress with a golden belt over it (which represent one of her divine power the seven me, that will be explain in the second story). Zeman depiction of Ishtar's physical appearance changed as Ishtar became more aggressive and cruel, her shape became frightening and more mischievous. The edges of her dress was torn, her hair was untidy, no golden belt over her dress, and she had bat - black - wings. Zeman skilfully, through the change of Ishtar's appearance, incarnated the change in Ishtar's character from powerful woman sitting proudly into enraged, out of control, angry goddess.

Not only her physical appearance was portrayed, all things related to her is portrayed as well for example Ishtar's gate. Ishtar's gate can also been seen Zeman's illustration of her own adaptation coping the original famous gate. The gate is an ancient building erected by Nebuchadnezzar on the north side of the city. The gate had bronze-plated cedar doors that did not survive unlike the walls that remained intact. The walls of the gate are painted with enameled inscriptions of bulls, representing the weather deity, Adad, and dragons, representing Marduk, the city's god. These dragons are shown with snake heads, lion bodies and forelegs, eagle hind claws, and scorpion stings in their tails. But though these are the icons of Marduk and Adad, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that the gate should be named Ishtar as a means for honoring the goddess of sexuality and war and to serve as a gate to the temple nearby. In addition to its beauty, the gate provided security for Babylon.(Fant& Reddish,2008, p.201).

Moving from the physical appearance of Ishtar, her personality is also given in depth. Ancient Mesopotamia gods, can have two sides according to human action and gods do not like to be disobey by human being. Gilgamesh not only disobeyed Ishtar by rejecting her offer of marriage, he added insult to injury naming all the men she destroyed. According to the original Epic of Gilgamesh, Ishtar was very seductive she tried to seduced Gilgamesh by gold and wealth "Let me harness you a chariot of lapis lazuli and gold, ...Kings, courtiers and nobles shall kneel before you"(The Epic of Gilgamesh, 2000, p.48) she told him that she would make all kings knee in front of him. Also she would make all his goats and sheep produce twins and triples. But Gilgamesh rejected her offer, he said "[Who is there] would take you in marriage? [You, a frost that congeals no] ice, a louvre-door [that] stays [not] breeze nor draught, a palace that massacres ...warriors" (The Epic of Gilgamesh, 2000, p.49). He started reminding her with her aggressiveness, as well as her violence and cruelty toward them, he tormented them in terrible way. Ishtar did not accept Gilgamesh's rejection and was deeply enraged so she returned crying to her father Enu asking him (in fury) to give her the bull of heaven to revenge

from Gilgamesh because he insulted her. She threatened her father that she would smash the door of hell and raise the dead from the underworld if he refused her quest:

'If you do not give me the Bull of Heaven,
I shall smash (the gates of the Netherworld, right down] to its dwelling,
to the world below I shall grant (manumission,)
I shall bring up the dead to consume the living,
I shall make the dead outnumber the living(The Epic of Gilgamesh, 2000, p. 51).

She brought the bull of heaven to earth, the bull spread danger and damage in the city and many people were killed. After a long fight between (Enkidu and Gilgamesh) and the bull, the bull was killed by the two friends. Ishtar cried and lament the murder of the bull, and as Enkidu heard her talking about Gilgamesh, he cut the bull's tail and threw it on her and said“ Had I caught you too, I'd have treated you likewise, I'd have draped your arms in its guts!” (The Epic of Gilgamesh, 2000, p. 52). The killing of the bull was an act that infuriated all gods for daring to kill a heavenly creature.

Zeman adapted the same plot but with some differences in details. Ishtar appeared after the killing of the monster Humbaba, she said to Gilgamesh that she helped him to kill Humbaba, and asked him to marry her “It was I who sent the winds to help you. Come with me and be my husband” (Zeman, 1993). Ishtar here treated Gilgamesh as if she owed him in return for her favour in helping him. Just like the original version, she seduced him with power and wealth and that all kings will kisses his feet. Gilgamesh refused “GO AWAY, Ishtar,” Gilgamesh answered. “You do not tempt me with your riches or power... My people love me and I honor them. I have a friend who is ready to give his life for me. I need nothing more.”(Zeman,1993). Zeman replaced the reasons of Gilgamesh in the original epic with these reason which is more suitable for children. Also, it is an important lesson that children should learn; friendship and human relation are priceless. Gilgamesh chose the love of his people and his friend over the materialistic offers of Ishtar. Ishtar felt insulted and her “eyes blazed.” “You dare reject me?” She rode off in a fury of hate.” (Zeman, 1993). Before the two friends could celebrate their victory over Humbaba, Ishtar returned with the bull of heaven to take her revenge from Gilgamesh. The huge beast crashed and smashed the walls of Uruk city, and killed many innocent people who were trying to stop it. Enkidu was the only one who was able to catch the bull and with Gilgamesh's help, they killed the bull. She was astonished “Ishtar's scream cut the skies as she saw Gilgamesh kill the bull” (Zeman,1993). Ishtar said to Gilgamesh in fury“I will find a way to hurt you!” she yelled. “I will not rest until you are punished.”(Zeman, 1993), as Enkidu heard what she said, he cut the bull's tail and threw it on her, and he said to her“Do not threaten my friend!”(Zeman,1993). Ishtar's rage reached it peak, she insulted for the second time, and she started plot her revenge. Neither the earth nor the sky's monsters could harm Gilgamesh! So she decided to hurt him by harming his beloved people. So she sent an illness to his dearest friend Endidu as a result he died. Gilgamesh's heart was broken, he was weeping and grieving his friend begging him to not leave him alone“Do not leave me now, dear friend, he begged, weeping! We fought monsters and won. There is more for us to do”(Zeman,1993). In this way Ishtar fulfilled her revenge by breaking Gilgamesh's heart, which ensure her wickedness and violence.

3. Christopher Moore

Christopher Moore, born in the United Kingdom. He is an adult and children's book author, he also translates and edits a lot of these books. As an author, he has many works, such as the book *King Abba: A Philosophical Fantasy*, *Behind the Mountain*, *The Voyage of the Kresala* and the award-winning '*Ishtar and Tammuz*' (C. J. Moore. n.d.). His children's version of the myth was illustrated by Christina Balit.

3. 1. Ishtar and Tammuz: A Babylonian Myth of the Seasons (1996)

Moore based his story on "Inanna's descent to the netherworld" myth starting with Inanna, the goddess of love, sex, and war who lived in heaven decided to go to the underworld for mysterious reasons. She started to prepare herself, she gathered the seven me and placed the crown on her head, the lapis around her neck, the gold ring over her wrist, the robe around her body, and she took the lapis rod and line in her hand. Inanna ordered her servant Ninshubur that if she did not return, she must lament Inanna, dress like a beggar and go to the houses of gods for help. Inanna told her servant to go to Nippur to Enlil's temple first, and second go to Ur to Nanna's temple and in each one she has to cry out for help and if he did not help, she must go to Eridu to the temple of Enki (the god of wisdom) who will help her as Inanna said. Inanna went down and arrived to the gates of the underworld. She cried out for the guard of the gates to open the doors and let her in. Neti (the guard) asked her about the reason of her coming, she answered that because of her older sister, she came to attend the funeral of Ereshkigal's husband Gugalanna. Neti told Inanna to stay till he goes and ask his queen, Neti told Ereshkigal that Inanna came and she has prepared herself and gathered the seven me. Ereshkigal told Nintu to close the seven gates and they one by one opened and as she crosses each door remove her royal clothes. The guard did what he asked for and removed all Inanna's royal looking, until she reaches the throne of her sister naked. Inanna was surrounded by the Anunna, also known as Anunnaki, the seven deities of the underworld. Ereshkigal struck her with the eye of death that turned Inanna to a corpse and she was hung on a wall. For three days Inanna did not return to upper earth, her servant did the same as she ordered him and he went to Enlil and Nanna and did not help him. He went to Enki and told him about what happened to Inanna. Enki took some dirt from under his fingernails and made two creatures named Kurgarra and he gave him the food of life, and from the other hand he created Galatur and gave him the water of life (both of them neither male nor female). He ordered them to go to the underworld and enter like flies. They went to the underworld and entered the doors reaching to the throne of Ereshkigal. She asked them about their coming and what they want and offered for them a lot of things but they refused. So, she asked them what their wish and they told her that they want the corpse of Inanna. She gave them the corpse, and they both sprinkled the food and water of life and Inanna arose. The judges let her go to the upper earth under one condition that she must provide someone in her place. Inanna agreed about that and she went to the upper earth with the company of the galla (to bring somebody in Inanna's place in the underworld). The galla were the demons of the underworld who know no food, no drink, accept no gifts, they were tear the bride from her groom, the child from his parents, and they had no lovemaking. One of them walked in front of her and the other one behind. As Inanna reached the earth, Nishubbur was waiting her, and he was wearing soiled sackcloth. When he saw Inanna with the demons he threw himself in front of Inanna's feet and the galla try to take her to the underworld but

Inanna refused because she was the one who wait her and save her. Later on the galla saw shara and Lulal and also tried to take instead of Inanna but she refused as well. As she went deep in Ur city she find Dumuzi (her husband) sitting on throne, well dressed and not effected by his wife absence. So Inanna told the galla to take him to the underworld. Dumuzi asked the god Utu for help (the god of justice) to change his hands and feet into hands and feet of snake to escape from the demons. The god Utu answered his request and turned to a snake and run away from them. Then a fly told Inanna that Dumuzi in Geshtinanna's house where she found Dumuzi on the edges of the sreppe weeping. Inanna told him that you would go to the underworld for half year and your sister the other half, so she placed him in the hands of eternal.

According to Moore's children adaptation of the myth, Ishtar, the queen of stars and moon, the goddess of all creation possessed the power of life and death of all beings. She was the responsible about sending storms and thunder upon earth and sometimes sent terror and wars. Ishtar loved earth that why she sent her son Tammuz to live there. Tammuz was loved by all people of earth and they call him the Green One, for wherever he walked the earth flourished and the birds with other animals were following the sound of his flute. Ishtar got jealous and envious from her son, she felt that his power threat her own, so she sent messengers to kill Tammuz. They killed him and he sent to the underworld, the world of dead, that was ruled by the queen of darkness Allatu, Ishtar's sister. Allatu welcomed Tammuz with mocking manner because both sisters hated each other. After Tammuz death the earth died as well, no plant was bloomed, no bird was sing, the rivers were dry, people were sad first for their lost of the beloved Tammuz, second for the barren earth. They were suffering out of hunger and thirst, they cried for Ishtar to help them. She heard their prays and came down to earth to find nothing but lifeless place every plant died, grass, trees, flowers..etc, the ground was as hard as stone, the bird were silent and people faces were tired and sad. She saw the priestess were praying upon the altar with their uplifted arms asking her to take what was left to them from every precious seeds and fruits just to let Tammuz back to them again, because he was the green spirit of the land. Ishtar obeyed their request because she too had loved him and felt that she lost him, so she decided to go to the underworld to do a battle for Tammuz to bring him back. So, she prepared herself with all her power and strength to go to the realm of darkness. As she left the earth, everything became gloomy and dull. Fear and despair spread in every heart of beings, the birds covered their heads with their wings, and the other animals fell in deep sleep like death. Ishtar went deep down and reached the cold city of the dead with seven walls and seven gates where her sister ruled. In each gate the guardians order her to give something she wore, they take her crown, jewels, girdle, and the silken gown. She gave all her royal splendour and power and as she crossed the doors, they were shut behind her. She entered her sister throne who was half-women and half-lion surrounded by salamanders and snakes. Tammuz was sitting next to her half-sleep, he did not look at his mother or even recognise her. Allatu laughed with victor tone when she saw her sister came defenceless. Ishtar was powerless, she cannot make a battle with her sister so she fell on her knees begging her was the only hope to take her son again. Ishtar embraced Tammuz against Allatu will and her warm tears fell upon his face, he awoke and clung to his mother. Allatu let Ishtar taker Tammuz under one condition that he return to the underworld six months each year. Tammuz and his

mother agreed and they went back through the seven gates, and Ishtar became a queen as she passed the doors restoring her royal look. They climbed the dark caverns back to the upper earth. As Tammuz reached the earth, he kissed the ground and the new life was born in all creatures again. All animals awoke from their sleep, birds started singing again, and the plant bloomed. From that time on, each year, Tammuz went to the underworld for six months leaving cold winter on earth and upon his return it flourished for six months with joy, happiness, dance and music.

3.2. Analyses of Moore's Ishtar

Ishtar is the protagonist in both versions, the original and the adapted. She is portrayed as being an aggressive, powerful, and vengeful woman. Her personality reflects her role as a goddess of love and war as depicted in the old representation scripts especially the Akkadian Ishtar. She is portrayed as a longhaired lady wearing a long robe, a horned helmet, and carrying weapons on her back in many situations. The weapons are seen as symbols of her role as the deity of war (Sugimoto, 2014, p.15). In other representations, Ishtar is typically shown seated on a throne, or standing proudly, or marching out like a warrior. She wears a big deity's high horned crown and either a tiered or flounced garment or high slit skirt over a warrior's short tunic. She is occasionally naked. Above her shoulders, a number of what appear to be carved "rods" emerge, which have been variously interpreted as weapons, plants, beams of light, signs of power, and even representations of *the me*, the divine aspects of civilization and culture. She frequently stands on a lion, her holy animal, or uses a rope to restrain the screaming beast. She is the only Mesopotamian deity known as *labbatu*, which means lioness. One of her symbols is an eight-pointed star, which represents her affinity with the planet Venus. The rosette, a sign that dates back to Mesopotamian antiquity. The presence of the goddess, as well as the entry to her temple, is signalled by a pole or standard with a ring and frequently streamers. Carnelian, a semiprecious stone, was important to her, and red was her favourite colour (Monaghan, 2010, p.23 24).

In the original poem, Ishtar's physical appearance is described only when she prepared herself to the underworld. She is depicted as woman with dark hair, wearing the "shugurra" the crown on her head, and jewels on her neck and breast, and the golden ring on the wrist. She wore the royal robe and the breastplate that called "come man come" and she "took the lapis measuring rod and line in her hand" (*The Descent of Inanna*, 2000, p.29). In Moore's children's adaptation the illustrator, Balit, depicted Ishtar as a woman with a long black hair, wearing a red helmet with blue horns and inscription. On her hair was a band with jewels that take the form of plants' leaves with four yellow flowers. She is also portrayed wearing alot of jewels, golden earrings, rings in her fingers and over her wrists, and over her upper arm as well. She was wearing a "girdle of birthstones" over a long red dress, above the red dress she was wearing a silken gown. In some pictures she appeared holding her mace and in others she was riding her chariot that led by two loins.

Ishtar true nature is portrayed exactly like the ancient epics of her. She is a powerful goddess, also she is full with jealous rage, anger, violence, aggression, envy and vengeful character. The main event happened between Ishtar the queen of heaven and earth and her sister Ereshkigal

the queen of the underworld. As it has been said before, that these two goddesses are bitter enemies. Ereshkigal felt alienated, left to rule in the shadows, she thought Inanna was greedy and spoiled, she get had everything she desired (Campbell, 2021, p. 61) which is correct.

In the original myth, Ishtar she decided to go to the underworld to attend the funeral of her sister's husband, the Bull of Heaven. (Campbell, 2021, p. 58). But there is an opinion that Ishtar went there because she was greedy and jealous of her sister becoming the queen of the underworld (Boudreau & Dickie, 2015, p. 102) for she was aspiring to be the ruler Heaven, earth and underworld. Her intention is clear in the original poem because she prepared herself with the seven me which represent the divine power. In the adaption version, Moore depicted Ishtar as "as queen of the stars and goddess of all creation. No being was more beautiful, more powerful or more, terrible...Ishtar held the power of life and death over all." (Moore & Balit, 1996). Here Ishtar felt jealous from Tammuz who is presented as her son not as her husband like in the original version. Moore depicted Ishtar as a very loving mother for her son, people, and earth but because of her jealousy everything changed. She put her son to death by ordering her army to kill him out of her envy and jealousy. She felt that the people on earth adore him what afraid her from losing her power on earth. As she reached the underworld(the original version), Ereshkigal was not pleased by her sister arrival and she was very scared. She order her guardian to stripes all The seven me from Ishtar, until she reached the hall of Ereshkigal naked and have no defence. Ereshkigal decided to take her revenge from her sister because she was the reason of killing her husband the Bull of Heaven, she killed her and hanged her on the hook(Campbell, 2021, p. 58). After the God Enki intervene, Ereshkigal is relent and Ishtar could leave to the world of dead under one condition that she had to bring an alternative to her in the underworld. As she return to the earth she found Tammuz, her husband, is not mourning her and not effected by her absence but on the contrary, he was enjoying his time, playing the pipe and dress well. She angrily order the demons to take him to the underworld. She take her revenge from Tammuz by sending him to the underworld, the place of torture and torment.

In both children's adaptations Ishtar is portrayed as powerful, jealous and envious. Power, which comes here in sense of authority and influence, was the main reason for the killing of Tammuz. Ishtar was very jealous and envious from people's love for Tammuz, she felt that this love would threaten her power as it mentioned she "began to feel that Tammuz was too much loved, and that his power was rivalling her own. Her heart hardened, and calling her messengers of war and terror, she ordered them to kill Tammuz." And she said to them "Let his blood run upon the earth" (Moore & Balit, 1996). After the killing of Tammuz, people start praying for Ishtar to bring Tammuz back to them. And also because she felt the sense that she lost him too. Ishtar decided to go down to the darkness kingdom to bring Tammuz back from her sister, Allatu, the goddess of the underworld. The two sisters were hated each other "Allatu ...hated her sister who lived in the light of the sun"(Moore & Balit, 1996), Ishtar did not go in peace so she prepared all her power "drawing on all her strength and powers, she set out for the realm of darkness." (Moore & Balit, 1996). Allatu was threatened by Ishtar's power so she ordered her guardian to strip Ishtar from all her power just to reach her.

The watchman replied, "Give up your crown and you may pass. It is Allatu's command."

Ishtar, furious, had no choice but to obey. At the second gate, she was made to

surrender the necklace of beads at her throat, the symbol of her power over the night heavens. At the third gate, she had to give up her pendant earrings... When she came to the fourth gate, Ishtar's bracelets of gold were taken from her wrists and ankles. At the fifth gate, she had to give up the jewels from her breast. At the sixth gate, she put off her girdle of birthstones...last gate, she had to leave her silken gown. (Moore & Balit, 1996).

Ishtar entered powerless, stripped of all appearances of strength, while Alluta was sitting powerful upon her jeweled throne, laughed with sense of victory when she saw Ishtar stood defenseless in front of her. Ishtar fell down on her knees in front of Allatu begging her to give her son back. After Allatu humiliated Ishtar as possible as she could, she said to Ishtar "Take him...But do not think you have overcome my powers. You may both leave my realm —on one condition: Tammuz must return to me for six months every year."(Moore & Balit, 1996). Ishtar had no choice but to accept her sister's condition. As Ishtar ascent to the upper earth she became again queenly and powerful.

In the original version, Ishtar descent to the underworld because of her greed for power. She was the queen of heaven and earth but this seems not enough for her, so, she decided to go down to the realm of dead. The world of dead was ruled by her sister Ereshkigal. Although she knew the bad effect of this journey, she risked. She prepared herself with the seven *me* (the divine power) to face her sister. Ereshkigal was very threatened by Ishtar "She slapped her thigh and bit her lip" (*The Descent of Inanna*, 2000, p.31) because she knew that Ishtar can get whatever she wants and no one could stop her. Ereshkigal feared losing her authority on the underworld, thus she ordered the guards of the seven gates to drip her from the seven *me*. In Moore's adaptation Ishtar entered the hall of Allatu with simple dress on her, while in the original version, she entered naked. Ereshkigal killed Ishtar and did not release her to the upper world until the god Enki interfered.

Ishtar, being a goddess of love, sex and war, is skillfully portrayed as passionate yet cruel. In Moore's children adaptation there are many different types of love; the love of Ishtar to her son, her love to the earth where she sent her beloved son to live, and her love to the people living on that earth. Moore's adaptation shows the duality of Ishtar's character; she was a passionate and a loving mother yet at the same time she was also cruel and harsh. Although Ishtar loves her son but once she felt that the love of people for her son threaten her power, she killed him becoming a cruel mother with no sense of mercy. Later on, People begged her to bring Tammuz back to them, she agreed because she missed him too. She felt their sense of loss and answered their prayers thus decided to go to the underworld to bring him back. As Ishtar descent to the underworld caused fear on earth:

As she departed, all the upper earth was plunged into gloom. It was as if love itself had left creation and in its place fear and despair filled every heart. The birds covered their heads with their wings, and the wild animals retired into the cold ground in a deathlike sleep.(Moore & Balit, 1996).

Moore presented this melancholic image of Ishtar leaving the upper earth enforcing her role as a symbol of love on earth. As Ishtar and her son returned to the upper earth people started to dance and celebrate Tammuz's return "thankful prayers were offered for the return of Ishtar's beloved son, Tammuz." (Moore & Balit, 1996). In the original poem, Ishtar entered the hall of throne the Annonaki surrounded her and Ereshkigal looked at her with the eye death, turned her to a corpse just like a rotten meet, hanged her dead by hook on the wall. Ishtar ascended to earth by the help of the god Enki, with the demons (galla) who were sent by Ereshkigal to bring the replacement to stay in the underworld instead of Ishtar. After many suggestion of who to replace Ishtar in the underworld Ishtar angrily ordered the demons to take her husband Tammuz to the underworld because he seemed disloyal to her, not caring about her absence enjoying his time and because he did not lament her. She cruelly made him pay for his indifference to her absence.

Conclusion

Although there were many deletions and changes in both adaptation, Zeman and Moore succeeded in portraying Ishtar's character. The deletion and the differences in the adapted stories compared to the original are suitable for children. Zeman portrayed the story in very accurate manner not missing a detail. She changed the reasons of Gilgamesh refusal of Ishtar's offer because it was terrifying and horrific how she tortured her lovers wickedly. Instead she replaced this terrible image with a more peaceful one, she attributes Gilgamesh's refusal to his love for people and his friend and his inability to separate from them. She also did not depicted Ishtar's rude way with her father Anu, not wanting to convey such event between daughter and father to the child. Moore, on the other hand, presented a bad image of mother – son relationship. He presented Ishtar's feeling of jealousy and envy from her son due to people's love for him. She also killed her son although she loved him, which present a horrific image about mothers. Moore's was able to portray her contradictory character of love and cruelty but not for children. The author put a note at the end of the story, that he choose Tammuz as Ishtar's son which was not correct. The story would be better if he made Tammuz Ishtar's husband just like the original, it would be more acceptable for children. He deleted what happened with Ishtar in the underworld, in the original, she entered the hall of her sister throne naked while in the adapted she remained dressed. Moore did not depicted the horrific images of Ishtar's torture and the demon was not mentioned as well. Finally the researchers concluded that both authors portrayed Ishtar's character as inherited in Mesopotamian culture yet Zeman's portrayal of Ishtar is more suitable for children than Moore's.

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