

# Significance of shamhat: "the epic of gilgamesh" essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



## **Significance of Shamhat: “ The Epic of Gilgamesh” Essay Sample**

The role of women in The Epic of Gilgamesh is very important. One particular issue that is demonstrated is the status of women in The Epic of Gilgamesh.

This is because of the fact that there are particular instances noted in The Epic of Gilgamesh that relate to contemporary men and women.

Prostitutions or the use of women for sex is the example that may be emphasized. The role of women is a very important topic in The Epic of Gilgamesh, and various women are chosen to represent various aspects of the conception of women. This is where Shamhat enters the story. What can we learn about her and what are her gifts for us here and now?

Shamhat, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, is the priestess of Ishtar, and the great goddess of love and war. She is called by Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, to discipline the wild man Enkidu and teach him the arts of civilization, like eating, drinking, and everything else as quoted by Shamhat, “ Eat the bread, Enkidu, it is the staff of life. Drink the beer; it is the gift of the land.” But the question is what is her significance? Certainly, she is one of the most exciting and mysterious character of the myth and religion, the character that begins in the first two Tablets of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Her presence is very meaningful and brief. Basically, Shamhat brought change and transformation whose mystery is as appealing as the value of a true erotic initiator she represents. Shamhat taught Enkidu to be a full man for his sake, not for her own gain. Indeed, Enkidu and Shamhat share an initiator relationship, but it's for the best. She inspired him to move further by making his own choices by

acting like a positive goddess figure in his life. Shamhat did not want Enkidu for herself, but prepared him for a world Enkidu had to discover by his own choice and doing.

For a more clear description, Shamhat plays the role as the serpent in the Garden of Eve. She is the demon character who tempts Enkidu into manhood with her beauty. He is the same as Eve who cannot resist the temptation; he is powerless to avoid these mysteries provided by Shamhat. Shamhat can also be compared with Julia Roberts in "Pretty Woman". In this case, she is the erotic initiator like Julia Roberts did it for Richard Gere in "Pretty Woman". Though she is considered as a prostitute, she made a difference in Enkidu's way of life. As this quote explains "Enkidu became weak, unable to run as before, but his mind was filled with a new wisdom." She led Enkidu to the discovery of his potential in all worlds. She represented the principle of love, and then took over Enkidu's world to set him free. She took Enkidu to let him find out the world of his own.

Now with this in mind, shall we still consider Shamhat as the serpent? Think of Shamhat not as a Seductress, but a seduction. Indeed she portrays love and delight to share for the glory of the spirit she saw in the person to begin with her sacred vows. Now, I would like to think of love not from cupid who makes us fall in love, but life energy and connection full of wisdom on which she provided for Enkidu. At first, I thought of Shamhat as a prostitute with moral as she did what she told to sleep with Enkidu. I feel that a woman like her should have more meaning in this world than just being a prostitute.

Though she can be considered as a prostitute, she also made a difference in

the society. She may have slept with Enkidu, but she helped him discover the meaning of being a man and so " Enkidu became a man." She gave Enkidu a chance to change for the better, and discover what the world has to offer. It is for Enkidu's own sake that she did what she has to do.