Vol. 25(1), 2025, pp.263-284, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

A Socialist-Feminist Analysis of Paulo Coelho's Novel *The Spy* (2016)

Zahra Saeed
Higher Education Department
Government of the Punjab

Abstract

This study aims at a qualitative, textual analysis of Paulo Coelho's novel The Spy, published in 2016, to explore several dimensions of its protagonist's life from the perspective of socialist-feminism, a theory originally presented by Barbara Ehrenreich in 1976. Among the issues and concerns it centralizes, the subjection and resistance of women about such social realities as class-based interests, class-struggle, etc., are of pivotal importance for the framework of this research. In the novel, Mata Hari goes through the injustices that reinforce the socialist-feminist's analysis of socio-cultural, economic, political, and legal sources of women's oppression in a patriarchal society organized under a capitalist economic system.

Keywords: Mata Hari, The Spy, Paulo Coelho, Socialist-Feminism, Patriarchy and Capitalism.

Introduction

The novel The Spy (2016) by Paulo Coelho is a historical account of Mata Hari's life through the narrative in her last letter. Mata Hari was an exotic Dutch dancer. At a very young age, she fled to Paris in search of salvation from a troubled marriage and became immensely famous due to her beauty and exotic dance movements. During her career as a dancer, she faced harassment and social disapproval. Due to excessive traveling for her work during World War I, she had been accused of being a double spy by the French and Germans. The lack of evidence, self-defense, and legal reforms for women in her trial led to her execution by the French military which worked as a web of powerful patriarchs.

The principal focus of the study is to understand Mata Hari's ordeals in pursuit of independence from a socialist-feminist perspective presented by Barbara Ehrenreich. She presents women as a separate class among other oppressed classes in a capitalist hierarchy and sees sexuality as making a class of its own against male superiority, just like the rich and poor hierarchy is seen from the Marxist perspective of society. She demands Marxists and Feminists join in a combined struggle against an oppressive state for a system of social justice. Her unique feminist point of view covers all forms of oppression of all kinds of socioeconomic classes.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License.

In the novel, Mata Hari, an exotic dancer, becomes a victim of social and economic injustice in a society where capitalists especially men control the means of sustenance both at the home and the workplace. Her life opens up a significant debate on the subject of women's right to independence and autonomy in a patriarchal and capitalist world. This is the main reason why it is important to highlight both the social and economic oppression of women who can be seen as an oppressed class and whose genuine concerns need to be addressed taken as a social concern.

First of all, the fact that Paulo Coelho describes these injustices through Mata Hari's letters in which she narrates her own experiences is important. MacKinnon in "An Agenda for Theory" holds that we live in male "perspectivity" as constructions that limit women's progress are celebrated by all (537). Julia Kristeva believes in this quality of art and literature in which we can see beyond the patriarchal perspective explaining the world (Tyson, 2006). The novel depicts different trials faced by Mata Hari throughout her life: The socio-economic ordeals are apparent in the development of the novel's major events that trace the protagonist's life in a manner that makes her symbolize capitalist oppression.

Coelho presents Mata Hari (born Margaretha Zelle) as an ambitious woman hailing from Holland with prospects of becoming a teacher. However, after realizing this dream her expectations from life are reversed as she becomes a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her school's principal. This tragedy happens when her family is stranded in an economic crisis resulting from losses in business. Socialist-feminist theory explains the social injustice entailed by the rape of economically dependent women by pointing out a deep relationship between theories of Marxism and Feminism: In the given situation, one can see that financial needs make the woman vulnerable to sexual exploitation. For this reason, socialist-feminists claim that sexuality is as basic to Feminism as class is central to Marxists and that sexuality is controlled by men to exercise their power (Ehrenreich, 1976).

Hence, dreaming of economic security Margaretha Zelle aka Mata Hari marries a captain from the East Indies but unexpectedly faces extreme domestic abuse with her face and body swollen with wounds. She goes through injustice and cheating despite being a dutiful wife. It shows how the institution of marriage is a disillusioned source of capital and security where women's labour is not recognized. Male privilege in marriage can lead towards cheating which is not considered as an immorality. After she sees a woman die due to her unfeeling husband, Mata Hari has an important realization.

She turns to the public sphere and faces economic injustice more directly. She flees her abusive married life to become a famous exotic dancer in Paris where she gets wealth, luxury, and fame by dancing. Internalizing her oppression, she exploits her sexuality as men want. Mr. Guimet, a theatre director, makes her strip for profit. Arstruc, her theatre agent keeps money out of her dances. Economic freedom does

not come with dignity. When the French have their fill, Franz Olav manipulates her into espionage telling her that she should go to Germany with her artistic skills. In the beginning, she remains unaware of her economic injustice. Her economic independence, at the cost of sexuality, depicts women seeking careers are victims of harassment. Her struggle for freedom is as a marginalized class in a capitalist society.

When Mata Hari tries to become politically conscious, she is faced with political injustice. She becomes a pawn in a game of power-hungry men fighting for hegemony in the government sphere. At her decline as an artiste, Karl Kramer, a German high official arranges Mata Hari's services as a spy for Germans instead of her job as a dancer in Berlin. After knowing the truth, she too finds it as an opportunity to get her lost fame in France back, but he begins to insult her for her poor work.

Ladoux is a French military officer disowned for wrongly accusing his political rival Dreyfus of being a traitor who is proven innocent in a probe; Ladoux feels humiliated. He finds Mata Hari a good prey to revive his politics as now he is working as head of counter-espionage against Germans. French begins to follow her every activity. Throughout her life, she faces betrayal, social disapproval, and finally trial and execution for the charge of espionage just because she seemed to the patriarchal establishment, a strangely free woman in times of WWI.

When she is under trial her accusers especially Ladoux are favoured by judges who give sexist remarks during the hearing that show legal injustice. Her judgment is given based on her character which shows how the same oppression of home against women sometimes operates at the state level. This highlights the absence of the aspect of gender and women's voice in male-dominated jurisdictions. She becomes a political scapegoat for the men in power. Therefore, Mata Hari is a case for the subject of socialist-feminism (Chang, 2010).

Theoretical Framework – Socialist-Feminism

The theoretical framework contextualizing this study is Socialist-feminism, which was originally developed by Barbara Ehrenreich in 1976. The notions that she was drawing on were already popular since the 1960s and continuously evolved to gain more and more importance in the 1970s. As the name itself makes it quite clear, socialist-feminism regards some features of Marxism about women. It says that improving the plight of women helps minimize oppression in many different forms prevalent in society. It also holds that sex, gender-constructs social-class system are intertwined. Mackinnon says that both sexuality and work are basic to Feminism and Marxism respectively: "Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism" (515), both need equal focus as basic sources of oppression.

There has been a strong connection between socialist politics for social justice and the feminist movements for gender equality as the capitalist system of economics strengthens the oppressive patriarchal society. They expose socioeconomic oppression and marginalization of women in unequal economic structures and they agree that at least those gender roles be eradicated and economic structures readdressed that become violent and abusive. Including gender discrimination within other equally important concerns like socioeconomic issues and racism, the socialist-feminists stand for deprived classes. They see both capitalism and patriarchy as the adversaries to human freedom (Arbor, 2017). With a socialist insight, they recognize the unfair capitalist society and with feminist insight recognize the undermined women in a violent patriarchal society. Both class and gender are involved in a symbiotic relationship, as none can be taken for granted (Napikoski, 2018). Socialist-feminists want to end all forms of discrimination to make a real change as for them any unequal system as a whole is oppressive (Gimenez, 2005).

Ehrenreich in her essay "What is socialist-feminism" defines Socialist-feminist consensus against violence or threat of deprivation, in their understanding of class and sex against sexist-capitalist society that depends solely on force. There is a link between Feminist and Marxist struggles, as both have an anti-capitalist plunge to build collective class consciousness and socio-cultural autonomy (par. 22, 26). Ehrenreich defines sexism, blooming in all social relations, as a class struggle. Among women, housewives are contributing to society by serving their families. They are "members of the working class…they do produce surplus value… maintaining a community's cultural and social arrangements" (par. 19).

Socialist-feminism highlights the economic, social, and cultural role of women as a class whose important labour is deliberately undermined. Gender and sexuality as social constructs are both capable of transformation (Tyson, 2006). In The Second Sex, De Beauvoir says that "the division of sexes is a biological given, not moment in history" (28-29). Socialist-feminists take biology as a determinant of personality.

Keeping in view the idea of intersectionality presented by Kimberle Crenshaw in "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" in 1989, when socialist-feminist theory was still defining its focus, we can further understand the struggle more clearly. Therefore, socialist-feminism provides the most suitable framework for meeting the objectives of the present study.

Research Objectives

This study is undertaken with the following objectives of exploring the nature of ordeals, as depicted in the novel, that Mata Hari faced in her life:

1. To investigate Mata Hari's ordeals from a feminist perspective, studying them as a consequence of male hierarchy.

2. To investigate Mata Hari's sufferings that hold their own despite her remarkable professional success because of some deep-rooted strands of social structures she was surrounded with.

Research Questions

1. What are the forms of the ordeals faced by Mata Hari in her pursuit of socio-economic freedom?

2. How Mata Hari suffered at the hands of influential men despite being looked at by the society on one level as a successful woman?

Significance of the Study

This study is important from various perspectives. First is to understand socialist-feminism and literary texts which are related to Marxist/socialist intellectuals. This study takes Mata Hari as a special case for the women who face such abuse and socioeconomic injustices as collective experiences while making a career. Second is to know how the literary field can work on socialist-feminist views to reveal injustices to the oppressed classes; which will help researchers to concentrate on its basic aspects and find new ones. Third, the study traces and applies the theory of class with reference to sex and economics to advance the knowledge and hone the intellect of the students in the field of literature.

Research Gap

None of the previous studies on this novel have focused on finding out the aspects of the social, economic, legal and political exploitation from a Feminist and Socialist perspective. Hence, this study fills a research gap.

Review of the Literature

The book Socialist-feminism: A Strategy for the Women's Movement (1972) first used the term socialist-feminism. The classic Marxist writings of Engels (2010) like The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State and Bebel's (1971) Woman and Socialism as a profound critique of the status quo of patriarchy and capitalism are taken as basic Socialist-feminist texts. Furthermore, Woolf's (1989), A Room of One's Own and De Beauvoir's (2011), The Second Sex influenced materialist and Marxist feminisms that establish women as a separate oppressed class. The most relevant explanation of Socialist-feminism is given in Barbara Ehrenreich's theoretical analysis "What is Socialist-feminism" (Nailah, 2016).

In Framing Anna Karenina, Mandelker (1993), deconstructs Tolstoy's novel Anna Karenina and says that Tolstoy (2000) presents an aesthetics liberated from boundaries of sexual and class interests, freeing the individuals (78). He contrasts the depiction of women in society with that in art to criticize traditional bourgeois culture that constructs beauty as a feminine category that can be commodified in arts and society (182). Sheber (2010) has pointed out Marxism and Feminism intersecting in Jane Austen's novels: Persuasion (2018), Pride and Prejudice (2018), and Mansfield Park (2018) which has also been applied to Emma (2003) by (Catabran, 2015). Sheber (2010) highlights the competition among women and how women's thinking patterns reflect the repressive socioeconomic conditions under patriarchy and emerging capitalism (42). Jane Austen occasionally subverted expectations that the first generation of her readers may have had from her women protagonists; though still inside oppressive patriarchal capitalism.

Duzgun (2018) in her study, states that Ibsen's A Doll's House narrates the oppression of a bourgeois woman, Nora who is degraded as inferior sex being economically dependent upon her dominating husband Helmer, a capitalist with superior sex who keeps her in the domestic sphere where she is degraded as an uninformed being in need of mental guidance. Moreover, he manipulates his position as bourgeois and takes care of her as a possession. Frustrated Nora decides to leave her marriage, defying morals, laws, and gender roles, for the outside world of power and economy. Her personal experience becomes an act of emancipation; a challenge to male-governed capitalist culture (85). Whether leaving home would give her independence from systemic oppression remains a question according to socialist-feminists who do not think that home and workplace are any different when it comes to the treatment of women (Ibsen, 2018).

The inter-connectivity of patriarchy and capitalism causing double oppression of Afro-American women in the novels, The Temple of My Familiar by Walker (2010), Meridian (2003), and The Color Purple (1982) is explored by Abbasi (2008) in his Marxist feminist study of the author Alice Walker (2003), he highlights that the slavery and subjugation of Black women can be eliminated if they get equal career opportunities and equal distribution of means and resources of production that both Black and White men hold in patriarchal capitalism (6-7).

Yahya et al. (2010) examine how society with its male-dominated economic system molds and defines women's identity in Doris Lessing's (2008) novel The Grass is Singing. Mary, a strong and successful woman, loses her socio-economic freedom after she surrenders to social pressure against her being a spinster and marries a struggling farmer. The research argues for change-driven "collective consciousness" of women and tells that the way society determines an individual's life, depends upon both capitalism and patriarchy, as when Mary acts as a capitalist she is killed by a male worker (11). Empowerment based on sex is a major factor that contributes to the economic well-being of women. Acceptance as equal sex and as a useful person who can join economic competition work side by side; if any one of these is lacking situation becomes difficult

for women. Mayer and Maree (2017, 2018) trace socialist-feminism to Okoye's (2013), The Fourth World in which a woman grows as an individual in a radical African community through work which in turn transforms the demands of survival into agency (Mayer, 2018).

Bhardwaj (2016) and Sharma (2015) in their respective studies apply Marxist feminism to Maxim Gorky's (2006) propaganda novel Mother that is from the viewpoint of revolutionary Mother figure Nilovana who takes responsibility for the worker's revolution initiated by her jailed son Pavel. The struggling life and problems of wretched workers victimize their wives in capitalist society. In the same way, Gilman (1979) in Herland envisions an all-woman society where ethics of motherhood are infused in society to create a better and peaceful world. Gilman's idea of a peaceful world created out of motherly feelings represents a "democratic socialist imagination" (Robertson, 2018). Reynolds, Sanders, and Morrison find a class struggle for revolution against the bourgeois in Gilman's (2015) "The Yellow Wallpaper" exploring the exploitation of class relations under gender inequality suffered by women in the 20th century (Gilman, 2015).

Saying that Paulo Coelho has some socialist-feminist undertones is always justified because he plays and melts with boundaries like spirituality and materialism, love and its physical expression, marriage and prostitution, and in that most of his books, that narrate his experiences, present a female protagonist placed and struggling in a world of materialist interests. Coelho, as a writer who makes a lot of money from his bestsellers not only in his ideas but also in his writings with "spiritual" lessons understands a materialist side of business. He is an artist who is also involved in the prospects of the contemporary commodity culture of the business of writing and publishing bestsellers. His appreciation of the importance of money for us to get what we want in life is mentioned in the introductory section (Coelho, 2011). He also holds that happiness does not depend on prosperity: as he shows in Alchemist that working towards a destiny is real wealth that he found in his writing (A&E Television Networks, 2019).

Coelho's novels are often characterized for excessive moralizing. Some readers will find joy diving deeper into the puzzles he poses in his works, while other readers will not feel depth of the characters and find them shallow (Jones, 2005; Coelho, 2009).

In "The Spy Review," Woodhead (2017) criticizes Coelho for incurring "cod-wisdom" through his novels that seem clichéd self-help writing. That peculiarity is also observed in The Spy, the tale of Mata Hari. The novel being too hasty fails to make the reader much interested in the charming protagonist Mata Hari for long. Coelho doesn't look determined enough to dig deeper into the psyche of his case studies like Shipman's (2008) profound work Femme Fatale: Love, Lies and the Unknown Life of Mata Hari.

Another novel that is dismissed for its ingenuity as a rushed job and being too clichéd is Adultery (2015). A profoundly complex subject, invoking multilayered morality and the

nature of love is insincerely dealt with. Not only the characters but also the topic of depression is shallow. Things are not developed and connected cohesively. Still, the ending seems genuine when the female protagonist has an epiphany through "the divine in Nature, of being reminded we are small beings' part of a larger mysterious entity" (Morrison, 2014).

Some critics justify the allegation of Coelho's short sentences and phony style by pointing out the fact that long sentences are not a measure of profundity. His books are called "spiritual twaddle" and even "tosh". Coelho remains unapologetically himself when he says that he writes from his soul. This is what he is and acting like someone else could jolt his world (Day, 2005).

Coelho's dispositions are multilayered so are the themes of his novels that have been seen through various theoretical frameworks. Anwar (2018) theorizes Coelho's novels through the lens of existentialism and explores three aspects i.e., nature's role, decision making and actions in human beings' life working as basic sources for human beings' rise and fall. Coelho optimistically presents human existence in this universe.

Also, Coelho debunks the binary opposites as he tears apart the strict division between "the sacred and the profane, the male and the female, and the sensual and the spiritual" (Ashraf, 2015; Coelho, 2005), to show their harmonized coexistence as they complement each other. Such a connection, between a prostitute who represents impurity and a religious female figure who symbolizes virginity and purity, destroys the binaries. "Maria's odyssey of self-exploration is regarded as a microcosm of woman's odyssey. However, [Maria's] coming-of-age journey… extends to all women, which creates a sense of solidarity among them" (5). The idea in this article can be connected to Mata Hari's tale as a consciousness for all oppressed women who want independence from all the social stigmas.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Textual Analysis:

This is a qualitative study that uses a model of the analysis presented by Braun and Clarke (2008) whereby themes are extracted from the primary source, *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho. This research highlights the themes of the injustices faced by Mata Hari as a woman in patriarchal capitalism as revealed in the novel.

Steps taken for the textual analysis are as follows: First, the text has been thoroughly read in that any recurring patterns in the novel's events, images, characters, and symbols have been marked as codes that appeared in the text. Second, the similar codes have then been clustered together forming subordinate themes marked in the novel. Third, the identical subordinate themes observed in the text have been collated together to form major

themes. Last, the whole process has been repeated to review and ensure the validity of the final major themes.

The theme of social injustice has been traced from subordinate themes like Mata Hari's lack of position and support in her family and society, from the codes like rape, domestic abuse in marriage, and cheating husband. The second theme of economic injustice has been drawn from subordinate themes like challenges facing women in careers and the lack of dignified careers for them with codes like the objectification of the body, sexual harassment, economic dependence, and use of the body for capital. A third major theme is legal injustice which has been extracted from the sub-themes of gender biased legal system, gender discrimination, and presumptions in legal trials and lack of gender-sensitive legislation from the codes like the absence of legislation from a feminist perspective, gender conformity as a system of morality, legal trial of an independent woman, a victim of legal revenge and lack of evidence. The final theme is political injustice which has been dug out of the minor themes of gender biased political system and political revenge from the codes like the political bias against women, political scapegoating and victimization based on morality and cultural ethics, and lastly gender discrimination in politics.

Analysis

The table below explains the codes, subordinate themes and major themes:

Table 1

Codes in the Text	**Subordinate Themes**	**Major Themes**
Unwanted sexual encounter Abusive marriage Cheating in marriage Subordinate position at home Lack of family support	Low social position of women Lack of social support	Social injustice
Objectification of body Sexual harassment Economic independence Use of body for capital	Challenges faced by women in career Lack of dignified careers for women	Economic injustice
Absence of legislation from a feminist perspective Gender conformity as a system of morality Legal trial of an independent woman Victim of legal revenge Lack of evidence	Gender-biased legal system Gender discrimination in legal trials Lack of gender-sensitive legislation	Legal injustice
Political bias against women Political scapegoat Gender discrimination in politics	Gender biased political system Political revenge	Political injustice

Discussion

The four major themes of the study are discussed below:

1. **Social Injustice**

In a letter to her lawyer, which Margaretha Zelle aka Mata Hari expects to be delivered to her daughter, she describes the orthodox society she was born. Holland has been described as having conservative social ideals and morality most apparent in its ways of moral policing and conventional thinking patterns. Mata Hari is repelled by the lack of opportunities in Holland in the early twentieth century. For example, she says, "I cannot blame my parents for anything except perhaps for having given birth to me in the wrong town, Leeuwarden" (17).

While remembering her departure from her home to make a career as a teacher in Leiden, she also remembers her mother giving her tulip seeds (18). It seems her mother knows what lies ahead for her as a young woman living in that society. For her part, Mata Hari also has some knowledge about what society's approval means for a woman's survival. Being a grown-up woman now at the time of writing this letter before her death, she had certain experiences that would be revealed to the reader during the novel: "All the men I've known have given me joy, jewelry or a place in society" (20).

Mata Hari is doomed to live with the traumas of experiences like the brutal encounter with the school principal. She says that her mother warned her that intimacy occurs only between two lovers committed for life (20-21). Later, her ideas about love would change: "From that experience [being raped by the principal] I began to associate sex with something mechanical, something that had nothing to do with love" (21).

Mata Hari aspired to become a kindergarten teacher because it would have been a profession suitable to her gender and helpful in representing a natural ability to serve and care. Women as a tool of culture serve the masculine state in its grand project of breeding disciplined citizens who through observation and comprehension of social laws can be in harmony with society. Rousseau argues in his treatise on education (titled Emile) that skills should be taught with due regard for a person's gender and natural abilities. Hence, being sexually different, women's education should align with this fact and they should acquire skills that may be useful for them in the domestic sphere as mothers and wives. Even though domestic labour can be a woman's choice and she is happily devoted to it, even this labour is not seen as a valuable contribution to the economy. Like Mill (1997) and Harriet Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft in A Vindication of the Rights of Women condemned this discrimination in education and advocated women's responsibility as individual beings to care for themselves in addition to caring for others.

In Marxist feminist understanding, sex and class domination rest ultimately on force to make the oppressed class timid with the threat of violence and material deprivation. She is thinking inside the male world where women's minds and sexuality are controlled, as if women's survival is not possible if they do not protest against the abuse. Brownmiller (1993) in Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape sees women's submission to the uncomfortable as their survival strategy. The constructed gender may become violent and serve rape; so, intimidation may lead to silence of the victim that should not be seen as agreement (15). MacKinnon (1982) in "Towards Feminist Jurisprudence" says that in the face of such a lost battle of sexes, women who face harassment become socialized to passivity or submission against the menace of harm and resulting humiliation as a strategy to survive (650).

MacKinnon (1991) in her work has linked constructions of sexuality to violence (248). She argues that sexuality is linked with gender and the power which men hold. She writes that sexuality is basic to feminism and women's condition depends upon it (3). In the same way, Mata Hari's sexuality was controlled by the male principal, who was in a powerful position. Thus, she keeps silent for fear of being expelled.

Mata Hari marries a captain and gets settled in the East Indies in search of security, as she regards her decision to marriage as a way of seeking emancipation: "There was my salvation! Officer. Indonesia. Strange seas and exotic worlds" (22) like many women in her society she marries for capital and future security. She is blind to his bad manners. Contrary to her expectations, her marriage does not turn out well and her life becomes miserable due to poor status in the marital relationship and unrecognized domestic work. In Feminine Mystique, Friedan (2001) deconstructs the idea that women cannot think about life beyond everyday domesticized gender roles. Moreover, as a mere trophy wife, Mata Hari has to bear cheating, the insecurities of a jealous husband, and humiliation while looking after her daughter and home. She lives her "worst nightmare, a distant husband who was always surrounded by other women" (24).

Engels (2010) says that monogamy is only observed by women as slaves (33). When Mata Hari shares her secret about how she was raped by her school master her husband forces her to act out a role of a woman who seems to love that abuse of rape. She is psychologically and physically tortured and gradually she loses her sense of self. With all this abuse, she is responsible for taking care of her child while "shuffling about the house with a vacant look on [her] face" (26). She has to hide her wounds and bruises with heavy makeup on her face (26). It is at this point in her life that she thinks that she "could no longer… live so far beyond the limits of human suffering" (29). The physical abuse in getting beaten up by her husband and being previously raped by the teacher blurred the lines through the similarity of violence involved. As MacKinnon argues constructions of sexuality (for instance, dominance and submission) may lead to sexual violence (646). In the system of gender

inequality, physical abuse is no more a crime or violence when it occurs in the form of legal intercourse. Consent is a myth in institutionalized male domination (650).

After realizing injustices of marriage, she flees back to Holland and considers abandoning everything to find herself because society still sees her as a bad woman: "I could no longer stand the recrimination of my father's new wife, my husband, a child who cried all the time or the small town filled with provincial people still prejudiced against me even though now I was a married and respectable woman" (42). Distraught, Mata Hari rebels against the social expectations that could lead to abuse. Ehrenreich says that feminists in the face of essentialist narrative have analyzed the biological "givens" which claim to precede existence of a human. "Men are physically stronger than women on average, especially compared to pregnant women or women who are nursing babies". Such physical advantage leads to sexual inequalities which may cause violence (7-8).

2. Economic Dependence

The economic injustices against challenges facing women like Mata Hari in their unrecognized labour and lack of dignified careers are associated with the objectification of the body, sexual harassment, economic dependence, and use of the body for capital. Women are seen in socialist-feminism as a class based on sex. Their sexual productivity makes them alienated social beings as archetype "women" in other's worlds. Gender relations are basic to feminism just as class relations are to Marxism. Both are political. As women's distinct experiences occur in their personal lives, their experiences become their condition everywhere. There is a need to readdress the economic system. Mata Hari becomes an object in marriage, taken as a property of a settled man; she faces a lack of reward for her domestic labour whereby she is going to raise her children and serve her husband while being abused as if she is not contributing to productive labour, a labour that is altogether rejected by men which means they will never choose to do such work. As described earlier, Ehrenreich holds that housewives are the most marginalized workers who contribute to society with their valuable work in serving men so that they work to sustain the capitalist economic system (19). This circulation of money does not spare women's share. Engels holds that women in marriage in a capitalist society are a class of unpaid workers, their burden increases with reproduction. This class lacks recognition due to their supposed dependence and because of the capitalist definition of the work they perform; it does not work for patriarchal capitalism (Engels, 2010). MacKinnon (1982) while presenting "An Agenda for Theory" acknowledges that Marxism recognizes that in the capitalist system, human beings are seen as existing as social beings along the lines of the value they create through work (515). Humans are social beings if they are producing something of profitable value this will make them survive in the system. Women are seen as dependent because their labour is taken as of not much value. Sex equals class in socialist-feminism. Getting economic security

through marriage while the husband's affairs are often socially acceptable for being in a privileged position seems to make prostitutes freer in their trade (De Beauvoir, 2011).

Mata Hari gives an account of how she struggles to be economically stable by becoming a famous exotic dancer. She has to sell her sexuality to powerful men for economic gain. She flees to Paris and chooses to be a strip-dancer after ending her marriage. This shows the objectification of women as a form of commodity. She gets her first break-through to perform in the Guimet Museum, which proves to be a major turning point in her life and she becomes an immensely famous dancer. This gives her a sense of economic independence at the cost of her sexuality as she is "just another one of those women who venture to the city of dreams in pursuit of wealthy men and an easy life" (43).

Though Engels, Kollontai and Luxemberg analyze the housework and private property system, De Beauvoir (2011) and MacKinnon (1991) compare the experiences of working women and prostitutes, with those of married women in a capitalist society, saying that there is only an illusion of freedom when there is always a danger of possible abuse (521).

No matter how freely Mata Hari thinks that she holds her sexuality under her will, it is not hers as long as the very idea of women's being is sexualized as class based on biological differences. Ironically, Mata Hari says in choosing to dance in public, she felt more independent and had exercised her choice but still had to pay a huge price: "[I]…in search of independence and excitement … found only loneliness and boredom" (65). She begins to see a lack of honor in her pursuit of position in society, instead, all she gets is shame and guilt though it was her choice (79) and an easy way towards "influence, money, gowns" (80). This refers to an important point made by socialist-feminism that patriarchy is not the only form of oppression but the social, economic, and psychological roots of oppression are deeply interwoven together in it, and all this directly transfers to the state level that legitimizes these constructions through discriminatory policies and commodifying women for entertainment. Moreover, socialist-feminists also argue that women who seek a career frequently become victims of sexual harassment.

She plays with the cunningness of powerful men in Paris to earn a living. Hence, the secure future, she dreams to live, still depends on the men who have been availing all the opportunities in the society as seen in her meeting with the French embassy official in a coffee bar. She says that he tried to lure her and she deliberately pretended as if she had fallen for him to get a "one-way ticket to Paris" (43). Ehrenreich says that the very existence of the capitalist class (mechanism of earning more and paying less) is dependent on the continuous abuse of the labour class and remains ignorant of their real condition (5).

3. Legal Injustice

Mata Hari becomes a pawn, in the hands of power-mongering men combating for authority in government circles in their respective countries. At her decline in Paris, Karl Kramer a member of the German spy agency manages Mata Hari's services as a spy for Germans through Franz Olav by lying to her that she will get a job as a dancer in Berlin. Coming to Germany and knowing the truth, she finds it a good opportunity to get her lost fame in France back. She thinks that she will become a powerful politician but Kramer begins to insult her for her poor work. While in France, Ladoux is a military officer renounced for wrongly accusing his political rival Dreyfus of being a traitor who is later proved guiltless in a probe; Ladoux feels humiliated. He finds Mata Hari a good prey to revive his politics as now he is working as a head of counter-espionage against Germans. French begins to follow her every activity to prove her as an enemy of France. When she is under trial her accusers especially Ladoux are favored by the war tribunal and spill sexist remarks during the investigation that show a sheer legal injustice.

During the uncertain conditions of World War I and her declining fame in France, Mata Hari decides to move to Germany but soon leaves dancing and attempts to return to France posing as an important person who can be useful as a spy. She does this only to advance her importance as a free woman in a world wherein influential officials of different countries are involved in war, but on her way, she gets arrested and later executed without any sufficient evidence. It was unusual for women to travel freely and meet important officials. The jurists could not understand this and get her incriminated due to her being a strange woman with a dubious past. It is normal for men to play the game of power politics but queer for women. Ehrenreich says that in a culture social interaction of male and female is regulated by laws that obscure the reality of male violence associated with intimidating physical strength found in history (par. 8). This has been the major argument of MacKinnon's feminist theory of state (1989) in which she advocated for the need of legislation from a feminist perspective and emphasized upon the need for eliminating the gender bias in a patriarchal society (249).

4. Political injustice

The reason that political injustice has been selected to be discussed as the last major theme in this study is that socialist-feminism suggests positing women in politics so that they can join government circles to speak about issues and make laws to be heard from their perspectives. All the injustices that Mata Hari faces are due to women's lack of power that comes with not actively engaging in the politics of their country. If society makes constructions, if economic competition is avoided by men, and if laws do not speak for the oppressed it means that it has some political interests intended for power that are preserved through society and government system. This power should be captured by the politics of the oppressed. It can be a globalized struggle

that is safe from the danger of essentialism because the oppressed from all walks of life are struggling for their rights. Coelho's The Spy is an excellent source for understanding the political ordeal suffered by Mata Hari attempting to contribute as an independent woman in the early twentieth century. She is educated to become a kindergarten teacher. She falls to her lack of enough political consciousness to decide for her social life. She chooses happiness in marriage as the only option open for a young girl. Facing a tragic failure in marriage, earning fame comes with a lot of harassment as a dancer and subsequently her decline Mata Hari, asserts herself in power politics. Despite having relationships with many influential politicians, she becomes a victim of the allegation of being a double spy working for both Germany and France during World War I. At the same time, she comes to be seen as a significant political threat to both countries.

Mata Hari, though initially believed that her connections with some politicians would save her from execution. Instead, all of this happens to be used against her as character assassination during her legal trial. At the same time, her acquaintances were saving themselves from getting exposed for having any connections with a strip dancer or prostitute so they avoided appearing as witnesses to her innocence. In addition to that, the politically powerful class of society would not allow the destruction of political hierarchy by including free-spirited women workers in government circles; in this way, she became a political scapegoat for men in power. This indicates the lower status of women and their alienation at the political level. She introduces herself in the political order under the guise of male-assigned sexuality for women. The last letter by Mata Hari's lawyer defines her as a "victim, a scapegoat for Captain Ladoux" (166). It was "sin of being a woman, for the greater sin of being free, for the immense sin of stripping in public, for the dangerous sin of getting involved with men whose reputations needed to be maintained at any cost" (168). He tells her that for sins of challenging traditional socio-political order, she was not to be forgiven by the disciplining state authorities as she was "not merely a person unjustly accused of espionage, but someone who dared to challenge certain customs" (173).

This indicates the need for analyzing the social, economic as well as political roots of women's oppression argued by the socialist-feminist theorists linking these experiences of women to lack of legislation. Ehrenreich says that the existence of patriarchy reinforces itself in every walk of life which appeared even more clearly after the emergence of capitalism. Thus, sexism, constantly active in our lives, can only be understood with backdrop of capitalism (par. 15). This indicates how the expected power politics between men and women make men avoid potential competition by marginalizing women in public life and by burdens of private life which leads to accumulation of resources in certain hands that become oppressive. So the private/domestic life (that is most unaddressed and where constructions of culture work the most), is where basic oppression of women lies.

Socialist-feminism does not deal with the single basic sphere of capitalist involvement, whether it is the domestic life or public life, production or consumption, or private or political aspects. Ehrenreich states that capitalism as a totality of social, cultural, political, and economic existence has penetrated every aspect of the economy, education, health and art, etc. It needs to be transformed through unified struggle by oppressed classes, through politics (suggesting a change in institutional structure) dealing with this totality (par. 17, 21). Socialist-feminism exposes the so-called plural democracy and romantic love to reveal a system of masculine class rule that is based on exploitation and injustice. Any restructuring by the marginalized will lead to social equality (9). So, counter-politics is required.

Coelho's novel encourages women's conscious awareness of their political struggle. He mentions at the beginning of the novel from Mata Hari's mouthpiece: "In that ancient tradition women had of always being one another's enemy and accomplice" (33). Disunity among women has always made them the state or community's direct slaves through norms and laws without their consciousness of being related to one another based on same sex and common experience. They have not been able to empathize or help each other. They become handmaidens or facilitators of women's oppression through internalizing it. They preserve the systemized oppression becoming the harbingers of cultural norms. This is how they become anti-feminists, leg-pulling other women through moral judgments. When she leaves her husband, she knows that she is "not doing this for [herself] but for all those women who are prisoners in their alleged freedom" (34) When Andreas's wife kills herself Mata Hari seems to have baptized with her blood as "through that rite, [she] was freed forever, though neither of [both women] knew how far this freedom would reach" (36). It is a very political statement as it foreshadows Mata Hari's death which Paulo Coelho has narrated to us readers so that women can be liberated by Mata Hari's unjust death connecting our collective consciousness that would affirm her experiences (regarding the injustices seen nowadays in different social contexts) (NurAyni, 2018). Mohanty (2003) in Feminism Without Borders, appeals to a similar interconnection of local and global, how experiences of women across the borders connect them. Hence, a global strategic essentialism, representing a collective group of women from different nations, can engage all women in a meaningful struggle for social justice. Ehrenreich connects women across continents based on their common experiences of inequality of sexism though belonging to different societies. Sexism can occur as infanticide of females or as uneven political representation indicating different types of patriarchy and women's oppression (13).

Thus, Mata Hari faced her ordeals with optimism, hope, and resilience and her struggle for seeking freedom indicates the class struggle for emancipation by a marginalized class in a capitalist society. For socialist-feminists one struggle from different groups serves all oppressed people. Under threat of violence and use of force which destroy the unity of peripheral groups: "Only by waging a revolutionary

struggle aimed at the seizure of state power can the working class free itself, and all people" (Ehrenreich par. 5). Mata Hari becomes a scapegoat in an already well-organized political setup of powerful men where marginalized men and women could only serve as martyrs or if they prove dissent become pawns during wars accused of evilness: spying on soldiers, getting money and arms from enemies, lobbying in the newspapers and destabilizing their own country by unions and struggles.

Conclusion

The rationale behind the study was to explore injustices faced by Mata Hari as portrayed by Paulo Coelho in his novel about her. The detailed analyses of four major kinds of injustices, i.e., socio-cultural, economic, legal, and political injustices, show the complexity of a society in which an individual is subject to several different kinds of political and gender-based constructs. The reason it is impossible, to sum up Mata Hari's attitudes in one sweeping judgment is that she had to respond to multilayered threats: freedom from domestic violence made her momentarily embrace the pomp of being a professional exotic dancer, only to lead her into a deeper realization of the price such a mode of life demanded. Her resilience against capitalism and patriarchy was in its nature such that it could not have any obvious conclusion.

Mata Hari, being a sexualized object, for patriarchs she comes across faces injustice of gendered and hierarchical division of power and women's experience of politics from a male perspective. In a capitalist system, the human body is in many situations treated as an object. The undervalued work, cultural sexism, and sexualized labour lead to women's alienation at home and work. Such dependency and subjugation at the domestic level led to deprivation, poverty, and displacement. In this way, the personal becomes the political (Collins, 2010; Foucault, 1988). The private and public divisions get destroyed when such a system is analyzed showing the same injustices in both spheres. The public sphere is an extension of what happens in the private sphere. Mata Hari, under a patriarchal and capitalist society, experiences a capitalist-male gaze that defines value in the light of the possibilities of material production. It decides whose labour would be unpaid and low paid based on what counts as work.

All social movements recommend praxis, a consciousness or an embodiment of their struggle to fight all forms of injustices against all forms of violence – analyzing its various forms and occurrences in the whole of our existence. State violence can be dealt with struggle to capture power through collectivism. There is a need for extensive political reform to address issues of the injustices of social hierarchies of humans, and victimization based on class, sex, and economics. By redefining productive labour and through redistribution of financial resources as well as gendered roles, one can hope for the creation of a more just society. As long as the laws of a society shaping public institutions and private identities are marked by the

sort of prejudices that we see in the novel, it is impossible to avoid the dilemmas of a woman whose life is tragically claimed like that of Mata Hari.

There is a need to add women's perspectives to end legal injustice towards them. A political consciousness among all women together with all the oppressed classes, who would demand an overthrow for a new setup, can end all the injustices. Both social justice and gender equality can only be achieved as a unified struggle toward a social order of equality and self-reliance that can serve the needs of all human beings. Mata Hari experiences sociocultural and economic injustice in her domestic life, which continued to affect her progress at workplace. She is faced with legalized forms of oppression in marriage and sexual harassment in her work both as a kindergarten teacher and as a dancer. She gets the same treatment from the state and government. She is not taken as an equal political participant in politics because she belongs to a certain sex and class. In this way, all injustices are interconnected and thrive together with each other. They are not mutually exclusive, disjointed, and independent but occur at the same time with equal probability.

References

Abbasi, M. I. (2008). *Marxist feminism in Alice Walker's novels: The Temple of My Familiar, Meridian, and The Color Purple* (Master's thesis). National University of Modern Languages.

Anwar, J. M. (2018). Nature's role, decision making, and actions in human beings' life: The philosophy of existentialism by Paulo Coelho and Thomas Hardy's novels. *Arts & Social Sciences Journal, 9*(2).

Ashraf, N. (2015). *The female body as the key to self-liberation: A feminist approach to Coelho's Eleven minutes*. Academia. https://www.academia.edu/21665533/The_Female_Body_as_a_Key_to_Self-liberation_A_Feminist_Approach_to_Coelho_s_Eleven_Minutes

Arbor, A. (2017, April 24). What is socialist-feminism? *The Feminist eZine*. http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/What-is-Socialist-Feminism.htmlAusten, J. (2003). *Emma,* edited by Stafford, Fiona. Penguin Classics.

Austen, J. (2003). *Mansfield Park* (K. Sutherland, Ed.). Penguin Classics.

Austen, J. (2018). *Persuasion*. Penguin Classics.

Austen, J. (2018). *Pride and prejudice*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Bebel, A. (1971). *Woman and socialism* (M. L. Stern, Trans.). Progress Publishers.

Bhardwaj, N. (2016). Maxim Gorky's *Mother* through the lens of Marxist-feminism. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, *4*(7), 33–36.

A&E Television Networks. (2019, November 6). *Paulo Coelho biography***.** Biography. https://www.biography.com/authors-writers/paulo-coelho

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brownmiller, S. (1993). *Against our will: Men, women, and rape.* Ballantine Books.

Catabran, I. E. (2015, October 27). *A Marxist and feminist reading***.** Prezi. https://prezi.com/ekkkl20hoap7/emma-a-marxist-and-feminist-reading

Chang, L.-W. (2010). Economics, evolution, and feminism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopian fiction. *Women's Studies, 39*(4), 319–348. https://doi.org/10.1080/00497871003661711

Collins, S. (2010). *Mockingjay.* Scholastic Corporation.

Coelho, P. (2015). *Adultery.* Vintage.

Coelho, P. (2011). *Aleph* (1st ed.). Vintage Español.

Coelho, P. (2005). *Eleven minutes* (M. J. Costa, Trans.). Harper Perennial.

Coelho, P. (2016). *The Spy*. Vintage Books.

Coelho, P. (2009). *The Zahir.* Harper Collins Publishers.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 139–167.

Day, E. (2005, July 2). A mystery even to himself. *The Telegraph.* [Newspaper article]. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3643720/A-mystery-even-to-himself.html

De Beauvoir, S. (2011). *The second sex* (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). Vintage. (Original work published 1949)

Duzgun, S. (2018). A cultural materialist approach to gender relations in *Ibsen's A Doll's House*. *Hacettepe University Journal of Faculty of Letters, 35*(2), 85–94.

Ehrenreich, B. (1976). What is socialist-feminism? *WIN Magazine.*

Engels, F. (2010). *The origin of the family, private property, and the state*. Penguin Classics.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the Age of Reason* (R. Howard, Trans.). Vintage-Random House. (Original work published 1961)

Friedan, B. (2001). *The feminine mystique* (A. Quindlen, Trans.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Gilman, C. P. (1979). *Herland.* Pantheon.

Gilman, C. P. (2015). *The yellow wallpaper*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Gorky, M. (2006). *Mother.* Echo Library. eNotes Editorial. (2019, April 3). *How does Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" reflect Marxist theory?* eNotes. https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-does-charlotte-perkins-gilman-s-the-yellow-1757565

Gimenez, M. E. (2005). Capitalism and the oppression of women: Marx revisited. *Science & Society, 69*(1), 11–32.

Ibsen, H. (2018). *A doll's house*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Jones, A. M. (2005). *Now there's a thought* in *The Zahir* by Paulo Coelho. *The Guardian*.

Lessing, D. (2008). *The grass is singing*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

MacKinnon, C. A. (1982). Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: An agenda for theory. *Signs, 7*(3), 515–544.

MacKinnon, C. A. (1983). Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: Toward feminist jurisprudence. *Signs, 8*(4), 635–658. https://doi.org/10.1086/494000

MacKinnon, C. A. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Harvard University Press.

Mandelker, A. (1993). *Framing Anna Karenina: Tolstoy, the woman question, and the Victorian novel*. Ohio State University Press.

Mayer, C. H., & Maree, D. (2017). A psychobiographical study of intuition in a writer's life: Paulo Coelho revisited. *Europe's Journal of Psychology, 13(3),* 472–490. https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v13i3.1184

Mayer, C. H., & Maree, D. (2018). The magical life and creative works of Paulo Coelho: A psycho-biographical investigation. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology, 18*(2), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2018.1511310

Mayer, A. (2018). Ifeoma Okoye: Socialist-feminist political horizons in Nigerian literature. *Review of African Political Economy, 45*(156), 335–344.

Mill, J. S. (1997). *The subjection of women* (Dover Thrift ed.). Dover Publications.

Morrison, R. K. (2014). *Adultery* by Paulo Coelho: Book review—New novel fails to stimulate.

Nailah, N. (2016). The reflection of Marxist feminism in Suzanne Collins's *Mockingjay*. *Lantern: Journal on English Language, Culture and Literature, 5*(4), 1–8.

Napikoski, L. (2018, July 22). *Socialist-feminism vs. other types of feminism: How is socialist-feminism different?* ThoughtCo. https://www.thoughtco.com/socialist-feminism-vs-other-feminism-3528987

NurAyni, D. (2018). *Women's oppression reflected in Paulo Coelho's* The Spy *novel (2016): A feminist perspective* (Graduation thesis). Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

Okoye, I. (2013). *The fourth world*. Ifeoma Okoye.

Robertson, M. (2018). *All woman: The utopian feminism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.* In M. Benjamin (Ed.), *Print*.

Sharma, A. (2015). Marxist-feminist approach to Maxim Gorky's *Mother*. *International Journal of Applied Research, 1*(7), 277–278.

Sheber, S. (2010). *Intersections and implications of feminist and Marxist critical theory in Jane Austen: Persuasion, Pride and Prejudice, and Mansfield Park* (Honors project, [Institution Name]). Honors Projects, 11.

Shipman, P. (2008). *Femme fatale: Love, lies, and the unknown life of Mata Hari.* Harper Perennial.

Tolstoy, L. (2000). *Anna Karenina* (L. J. Kent & N. Berberova, Eds.; C. Garnett, Trans.). Modern Library.

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Walker, A. (2003). *Meridian*. Harcourt.

Walker, A. (2010). *The temple of my familiar*. Mariner Books.

Walker, A. (1982). *The color purple*. Harcourt.

Yahya, W., Roselezam, W., & Pedram, L. (2010). A socialist-feminist reading of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. *The International Journal of the Humanities: Annual Review, 7*(12), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9508/CGP/v07i12/42763

Woodhead, C. (2017, January 6). *The Spy review: Paulo Coelho's fictional take on Mata Hari misses the mark. The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Woolf, V. (1989). *A room of one's own*. Mariner Books.

Zahra Saeed is a Lecturer (English), Higher Education Department, Government of the Punjab.