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## The nuance of sita & hermione a study based on 'Uttararamacharita' and 'The winter's Tale'

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### Abstract

The Uttararamacharita and the winter's Tale were composed in distinct time period by two distinguished writers Bhavabhuti and Shakespeare. The analysis of female leads in two different strata of drama literature is quiet exciting. Indian and western perspective of heroines is entirely different but similarities can be traced from them. Plot, characterization and dramatic techniques persuaded to compare them together. The nuance of Sita and Hermione in both the plays are disastrous and inspirational. Their resilience and mental stability in facing tragic events can be traced from dramatic situations. Both writers give prominence to the female leads and consider them as individual. They both are ideal of women empowerment and pride. They are self-centred give value for love, compassion, friendship and family relations. The characteristics of these two heroines their actions, behaviourism, impact on totality of story line, unconventional believes and positivity are enough to understand socio-cultural aspects of Feminine groups of that time. Their life put forward the cognizance of self-perception and also claim their rights as individuality. This paper is an attempt to trace the character of Sita and Hermione in both plays certainly creates history for womanhood and their bounce back with radical changes throughout the periods.

**Methodology:** The methodology used in this research will be analysis of two characters on the basis of comparative treatise.

**Keyword:** Magnum opus-resilience- 'self-pity' - 'self-perception'- emotion- mistrust- forgiveness-reunion

### Introduction

Classical literature is a vast treasure of feminine leadings. Among those the character of Sita in Uttararamacharita of Bhavabhuti and Hermione in the winter's Tale of William Shakespeare are remarkable one. Both writers picturised the emotional side of individual heroines. Their expressions throughout the play are critically appreciated one. They both are entirely different in backgrounds, society, culture and also life experience. But as a play lead on stage, they have similarity in expressions, attitudes and responses.

Bhavabhuti's masterpiece Uttararamacharita had one peculiar mission of changing the conventional story line. He tried to retell the Ramayana story with slight variations. He put forward some justifications to Rama's actions for which the entire world questions him. The writer also considers Sita as an individual with prominence and respect to her. Sita as a mythical character she had many shades but this drama treated her as a normal woman who as obedient daughter, loving sister, good companion, devoted wife, respectful daughter in law, affectionate sister-in-law and a compassionate human being. Mentally she as a warrior who fight against the wicked actions with silence and calmness. Her mental power to recapture the normal situation is appreciable one. This is the common features seen in the heroine of Shakespeare also.

The winter's tale is a popular play in five Acts. It is a 16<sup>th</sup> century play grouped among the comedies and problem plays of Shakespeare. The first three acts of the play intensely treated as psychological drama. The fourth named Pastoral act was largely popular. Which outburst the result of jealousy and ego, that destroys the relations and ends with reunion of family members. Hermione the heroine had to suffer a lot. She faced pathetic situations a number of times. She never loses her dignity and self-respect. Like Sita she also waits for the revelation of truth. She made the play a tragic comedy. Value of family relations, the role of understanding and forgiveness is the most highlighting features of this play.

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### Sita as Epic Character

Sita a mythical character had many lives <sup>[1]</sup>. She is known to be the incarnation of goddess Mahalakshmi. She came to earth to complete divine duties along with lord Vishnu. A number of myths are attributed to Sita <sup>[2]</sup>. According to the Ramayana plot, Sita married Rama and due to the wicked plans of Kaikeyi, they had to go forest along with Lakshmana. They lead a hermitage life at Pancavati. From there the demon king Ravana abducted her. With the help of Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhishana and other local forces Rama binds the ocean and reached Lanka to save her. He killed Ravana and back to Ayodhya and take the charge of the king. Uttarakanda is the last part of the Ramayana <sup>[3]</sup>. It depicts the story after the coronation of Rama. With the words of a washerman to keep the doctrine of dharma, Rama was forced to leave Sita. He left her with the help of Lakshmana. Pregnant Sita give birth to twins at Valmiki's hermitage. The sage look after the twins. When Rama visited the hermitage in account of killing Shambuka <sup>[4]</sup> he met with his sons. Sita came there and handover their sons to Rama and vanished to earth.

### Sita as Bhavabhuti's Heroine

Bhavabhuti's Uttararamacarita begins with the scene of pregnant Sita along with Rama and Lakshmana watching the pictures of Pancavati in the imagination of artists. She shows the desire to visit the same place again with Rama. After that, while Sita taking rest with Rama <sup>[5]</sup>, Durmukha came to inform Rama that the Washerman's arguments against accepting Sita as the queen of the country. Concerning the words Rama casts the pregnant wife away from his life with the help of Lakshmana. At forests the river Ganga and Prithvi protected her from jungle beasts and made her safe in the hands of Valmiki. There she gave birth to twin boys. She went back with Prithvi. Valmiki nourishes the boys. Rama conducted Ashvamedhayaga, with golden statue of Sita. His sons conquer the horse and conduct conflict with the soldiers. A brahmin boy died by the after effect of penance conduct by a subaltern named Shambuka. Rama came to kill him and meet with his sons. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> acts portrays the essence of pathos with Rama finds himself in Dandakaranya assaulted with the memories of Sita <sup>[6]</sup>. He cried out with pain. Due to unbearable pain, he fainted. Invisible Sita watching all this. She brings back him to sensible stage with a single touch. Strenuous mind of Rama acts like mad and he whispers about Sita. She understands the circumstances that leads to Rama's actions and realise that his love, affection and feelings are bounded with her forever. She reached in a decision that she can go back to his life with pride and integrity.

In the last act Bhavabhuti pleats, all the characters together along with the citizens of the country to witness the drama that illustrates the life journey of Sita after being discarded from country. Her sufferings, fear, protected by Ganga and Prithvi, after delivery of twins at Valmiki ashrama she entered in to posterior world etc are portrayed in drama. Seeing this drama Rama fainted again believing that Sita reached out of his hands. At the end of the play a miracle happens Sita rises from water along with Ganga and Prithvi. They together handed over her to Arundhati <sup>[8]</sup>, announcing the purity to the whole world. Sita restores Rama to consciousness with a touch. Everyone assembled there bowed her and the whole world blessed her with showering flowers. Rama accepts her and the play ends here.

Uttararamacarita is outstanding drama for its infrequent compassion towards Sita with great dignity as a woman and whose emotions are valued. The writer's innovative mind

creates a far lyrical beauty to the drama. He attributed this drama with the concern of healing Sita's scattered mental wounds. With the writing of this drama Bhavabhuti as a representative of poets, provide poetic justice to the character of Sita.

### Hermione as Shakespeare's Heroine

Shakespeare portrayed women characters with prominence throughout the plot. Their presence, thoughts, actions, minute expressions and sometimes their disappearance also made the story line a new stratum. Their interactions also make impacts on other leading characters and totality of the play. Most of the women characters are from frank conflict to quite tolerant level. He treated women with vigour, passion, admiration and all other puerile emotions. The winter's tale is popular as a tragic comedy. A number of complex characters are portrayed in this story. The major women characters are motivational, emotional, lovable and compassionate. The depiction of Hermione in the winter's tale is truly a magnum opus of the writer.

Hermione, the queen of Sicilia and the wife of king Leontes is one of the chief characters in the play. On analysing the plot, it is clear that she is the pray of jealousy and hesitation by Leontes. In the beginning of the play, she is nine months pregnant. She is persuasive in nature, that's why king told her to convince Polixenes, his childhood friend to continue there for an extra week. The friendship with king and queen, he agreed to remain there. The king was surprised about how she convince Polixenes and he got suspect that they both had any affaires. He forgets the bondage of friendship and love and starts to accuse them for extra marital affair. She was publicly trailed for accused of adultery. But her character remains innocent throughout the play. She tried to keep her pride as women and as a queen. Her husband's injustice actions lead her towards the largest sufferings. In spite of that at the end of the play she forgives her husband. For the sake of family, she agreed to reunite with the king.

In the beginning of the play, she is a devoted wife and a good companion of king Leontes. She supported her husband to keep his friendship bond with Polixenes, king of Bohmiya. But later king humiliated her with suspicion with this same friend<sup>9</sup>. He never considers her pregnancy stage and long-term friendship. The words of king made her shocked for an instant. She never tried to show her honesty and the reality of the incidents. The king's plan to kill his long-term friend was cancelled. Hermione was imprisoned, she gave birth to a girl there. But the king left the new born baby with the help of Antigonus and royal servants in the shore of deserts. Between the trial of Hermione, the death news of Mamillious, her elder son came. She was not entirely improved from her second delivery pain at that time. This incident deeply affected her. From the beginning onwards she was very much confident about the protection of her own people. In fact, she sacrificed herself for the protection of the family. All her desires scattered by hearing the news of her son. She fainted but her companion Paulina informed the king that she died by cardiac. The sufferings and the agonies of the heroine is spread here and there throughout the plot. Tragic performances by Hermione are treated the audience/reader with the elements of pathos.

Hermione is an independent and confident personality, along with dignity and intelligent. Her character is multifaceted. From the beginning itself she was familiar with loving and supportive husband only. His sudden change made her shocked. But she is in a misconception that everything will be

like earlier after her delivery. But she went wrong when the king ordered to kill the new born. She never cursed anyone and faced the reality with a broken heart. The false death is utilised by the queen to protect her newborn. She appears as a ghost in front of Antigonus to tell him about the baby. Hermione's power of resilience is appreciable one. She overcome pathetic situations strongly. She demonstrates a renovative supremacy of love and forgiveness. She was aware of the essentiality of reunion and curing. She denied to live with the wave of self-pity. Even in most crucial situation also, she keeps her solemnity and morality. When the royal trial happens, she resists the blamers with bold and relaxed manner. Her silence itself is a weapon to fight against the evil actions of the king.

Hermione is very genuine personality with a kind heart. He treated everyone with love and care. Her relation with Paulina is remarkable one. She helped the queen to recapture the family and conduct personal vengeance. She is a self-centred and powerful lady can be considered as a perfect idol of women empowerment. Her character sketch itself is a signature one to Shakespeare's versatility. This family drama can easily convey with the emotions. The elements of pathos from the side of heroin and hero worked together for creating tragic treat. These plays narratives are unique with portraying tragic elements in the shade of anxiety, grief, mistrust and also repossession. Leontes's distrust towards Hermione, faithlessness with Polixenes leaving the newborn, trial of queen, death of Mamillious, false death news of heroine, king's regret, identification of daughter, statue episode, reunion with family and friends are the major tragic treatise of the play. Through this play the writer highlights the power of regret, forgiveness along with happiness of family life, the role of love and trust between couples. The play itself is a reminder for the after effect of mistrust and unrestrained feelings.

### Analysis of Two Heroines

A number of literary critics compares both Uttararamacaritam and the winter's tale because of its tragic elements and narrative techniques. Bhavabhuti treated an epic plot with variant emotional elements it became a tragic family story with happy ending. Shakespeare's work had certain similarities with story line and technical side. Both plays discuss the value of family, love, compassion, understanding and human emotions with deep affection. Both the writers approached the plot from the side of heroines as they were individuals. Heroic image come next to this. Pathos is the central idol for main and sub plots. Conveying emotions between actors and audience are highly remarkable one. Both heroines express love and compassion towards others. They are worthy on family relations. As devotional wife, faithful companion, lovely mother and compassionate human being both highlighted their characters. They faced similar situation and bounced back to life with bravery and strength. Both of them had a happy family with the bond of love and care. In a short span of time, they had to face the humiliation and lost their people's support. Through various struggles both regains the trust, without explanations. They accused of adultery faced public trial. They were the pray of male ego. The statue episodes in both of the plays portrays with the elements of pathos. The lament of heroes along with regret and cursing the fate is witnessed by the heroines. The chance to realise the faults and forgiveness to the wicked actions of heroes had similarity in both plots.

### Conclusion

Both Sita and Hermione impulsive in nature and are symbolised perseverance, boldness, self - detriment and innocence. Sita as a mythical, folklore and classical literary heroine has variant shades. Myths paved the way for treated her a female deity of agricultural fertility. At present many regions of the world devoted her as refined form of earth's fertility and prosperity. Sita herself was very much vulnerable towards attractive things as a common woman, at the same time she had shades of strong and independent personality. Some times she purposefully in the conviction that a woman emphasising her own supremacy is not honourable. She affected by the outburst of situations; but she faced everything with a strong mind. She as a victim of royal patronage and bright public life of Rama. Bhavabhuti intentionally portrayed life of abandoned Sita and her mental agonies. She never tried to convince herself and always shows great admiration on personal truth. In a male dominated society Sita lived as a devoted wife, behind the dazzle of Rama's admirable triumph. No other literary work like Uttararamacarita treated Sita as a heroine with this much shades of expressions, as joyful, glorious, splendid, ascetic, abducted, royal, family and single mother lives. Along with this Golden idol of Sita with human emotions and Vanished Sita with full spirit shades are ascribed to this literary piece.

Hermione as a sagacious female protagonist of Shakespeare. Her greatness and significant feminine attitudes lead the plot to a mind projected visionary. She as agonising figure with the shade of prudent attitudes. Her character ranges from peculiar reflection to speculative interrogations. Writer portrayed the sufferings of Hermione with exceptional consideration. She also had a number of shades in both physically and mentally. The winter's Tale highlights the tragic elements along with mind blasting expressions of heroine. Her resilience in crucial situations made her special to the readers and audiences. The ultimate paradox and misfortune of both Sita and Hermione are the approach of society. Characteristically both heroines struggled silently against the decisions of male centered society for their identity.

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10. According to Devi Bhagavatam, in previous birth Sita is famous in the name of Vedavati, she is the incarnation of goddess Lakshmi. Anandaramayanam also follows the same story line. Vedavati was attacked by Ravana, she cursed him and herself left her life and re- incarnated as Sita.
11. Many myths are attributed to the birth of Sita, Janaka got her from flaw land. Episode of Maya Sita, kancana Sita etc.
12. Uttara Kanda is the later interpolation to the original 6 kandas of Ramayana. It is known to be the last part of Ramayana text.
13. Shambuka, a Sudra ascetic; is an interpolated character. This story line is not found in Original Ramayana text.
14. अद्वैतं सुखः दुखयोरनुगतं सर्वास्ववस्थासु स-द्विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र  
जरसा यस्मिन्नहार्यो रसः। कालेनावरणात्ययात्परिणते यत्प्रेमसारे स्थितं  
भद्रं तस्य सुमानुषस्य कथमप्येकं हि तत्प्रार्थते॥ (उ-रा-च १.३९.)
15. The epics and Puranas depicted the character of Arundhati as a powerful woman, who preserved her chastity. She explained the meaning of her own name as “I am the one who consider all the mountains, earth and heaven only after my husband. In my whole life I give him all the prominence and importance. I am a great fan of my own husband. So known me as Arundhati”. She is a type of conjugal fidelity, and wife of great seer Vasistha.