

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The conclusions are based on the detailed discussions in the foregoing chapters. It has been tried to evaluate Pat Barker's novels – Union Street and Blow Your House Down – as realistic novels.

Union Street is a remarkable novel about the life of working - class women, their plight, injustice, oppression, humiliation faced by them. In the male dominated society, women is victimized everywhere as a daughter in her parent's house, as a wife in her husband house, as a worker in a factory etc. the novel brings into limelight the women desire for self – respect, escape from the humiliation, exploitation and it is presented through Alice Bell, Joanne Wilson etc. The novel is divided into seven different loosely linked sections.

In her second novel 'Blow Your House Down' , Pat Barker uses the same setting as Union Street – perhaps even the same neighbourhood. As Pat Barker is a regional writer the setting of her two novels is an unnamed city in England's industrial Northeast, where there are industries like the cake factory, the chicken factory and the steelworks Barker has presented a realistic picture of the working - class women in these industries, who are victims of their own attitudes, belief, and behaviour also.

The writer skilfully employs the factory setting, automation, human hardship, race prejudice, feeble-mindedness, motherly love for a new bore child, relationship between son and father, mother and daughters, friendship and love, atmosphere in the chicken factory and cake – factory. She has written much about having babies, raising

children, absorbing grief, loving someone or hating the characters spring vibrantly to life, their suitors, parents, siblings, husbands, children, their doctors, nurses, neighbours. She has also given as emphasis on the problems of unwanted pregnancies, the pleasurable sex, the dead – end jobs and violent husbands, the endless campaign against poverty dirt and prying neighbours.

All the characters in the novel are able to hold our attention and involve our emotions from beginning to the end. Undoubtedly, the novelist exhibits her capacity of probing deep into human psyche, especially female psyche, by exploring vast tracks of human experience in a unique manner. Like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Pat Barker has attempted to capture psychological convulsions in the minds of the characters.

The author has given a detailed account of insane, irrational behaviour – or we may call it reaction – of Kelly Brown after her brutal rape and how the emotional world of a girl shattered into pieces. The motherly love to a child as a natural instinct has been delicately shown by the author through the chapter 'Lisa Goddard' and on the other hand the toughness of Jean in 'Blow Your House Down'.

In her novel 'Blow Your House Down', she has given emphasis on the prostitutes and their problems while earning. It increases our heartbeats and is succeeded in holding our interest and eagerness and suspense about the murderer. It is the plot of a thousand thrillers, told from the point of view not of the male defective but from that of the

victims and potential victims. We see the prostitutes who are risking their lives – a serial killer is loose and prostitutes are his prey.

Coming to the novels' plot and technique, it can not be denied that the plot of the novels need rethinking. The author has used something different narration technique. Only the Part Three of the novel 'Blow Your House Down' is narrated by a character named Jean. There is not any chronological sequence in the novel. There are some time shifts. The narration suddenly moves forwards and back-wards. It suddenly moves forwards and backwards. It enhances the effect of the narration making the novel post – modern. It is essential to understand the variations in the narrative to grasp the point of view and the tone of the novels and it is a challenging task.

Being a women novelist, Pat Barker, supershines in delineating female experience, female psychological with a feminine sensibility in the characters. We come across Barker's each and every characters, in our life, portrayed in the novels. Many of the described events coincide with the actual events. As Pat Barker is realist, feminist, the characters in her novels, are showing similarity to the persons in real life. It is not only poor girls who become rape victims but even women employees are sexually humiliated and exploited by their employers. We come across the features of a society that encourage prostitution. It is suggested that many prostitutes are psychologically disturbed. In fact, literature is full of prostitutes but Barker's handling of this matter is very

effective. She has collected much information about their life – style, their likes and dislikes salty language used by them etc.

There are no limits to Pat Barker's province of knowledge e.g. prostitution, industries like the steelworks, chicken factory, cake factory and type of work in those industries. She has written much about a birth of a child. It shows that she has much knowledge of medical field and diseases. It is amazing that she is not unknown to the pubs. She has mentioned many types of drinks beer, cider, gin etc. She is really expert in descriptions and narration and no doubt, she has much knowledge of the working – class women and their sorrows.

Pat Barker has also the credit of creating so many new words and phrases, images and symbol, the striking similies and verbal abundance. She has used the words 'me' instead of 'my'; 'gunna' instead of 'going to' and 'I says'. This is just remarkable. She has written many sentences as per our pronunciation without taking into consideration their spellings. Her occasionally use of poetic lines is a different matter.

There is absolutely no doubt that Pat Barker has known suffering and injustice that she is in genuine sympathy with the suppressed and exploited women. The novels in its final analysis are profound and moving tragedy. Union Street and Blow Your House Down are no doubt, realistic novels because they are based on the acceptance of facts and there are portrayal of things as they really on.

The depiction of actual life with faithfulness and objectivity, as opposed to roman in which writer depicts life as she wishes it to be or believes her readers wish it to be Realism is the dominant mood of her novels. Union Street and Blow Your House Down. She assumed an objective attitudes towards the events she relates; she claims to report, to give facts, to conduct an inquest over the situation. Thus she vigorously excludes her own feelings, judgements, philosophical interpretations and recommendations for action. She modifies her realism by concentrating on working – class women’s poverty, degradation and humiliation. The realism in these novel is achieved not by imitation, but by creation, a creation which working with the materials of life. She is a realist with the cry of ‘life’ upon her lips.

Pat Barker uses a hoary fictional technique. Yet she is equally capable of brilliant bending the technical rules. All in all, Pat Barker gives the sense of a writer who has enormous power that she has scarcely had to tap to write a first – rate first – novel – Union Street. Really, as we have seen before this, extra – ordinary novel deserved a high praise heaped on it by reviewers in Great Britain. It is such a vision of working-class women’s lives that is heartbreaking, mordant and unique.

Delicately and compassionately, Pat Barker caught the central contradiction of her heroines’ lives, which is that they believe in female inferiority while being themselves for stronger than their men folk, and

derive their sense of worth from keeping up a front of brisk respectability that divides them from each other.

Literature is full of prostitutes, of course, but most of them are male fantasies of one sort or another hearts of gold, sex goddesses, calculating bitches, masochists. The characters in the novel. 'Blow Your House Down' e.g. Brenda and her friends fit none of these stereotypes. None, for example, feels anything remotely approaching a sexual feeling for her customers and indeed sex has rarely seemed as unappealing as it does in Barker's bleakly matter – of – fact desperations for these uneducated women most of whom have children and no husbands. The only jobs available are in the chicken factory or in the streets. Streets pay better and offer more autonomy and, ironically hours more suitable for child rearing.

In Britain, Pat Barker is regarded as a regional writer, but this is surely a trivializing misnomer. What distinguish her novels is not their regional qualities – an unusual setting, salty dialect, pungent, raunchy dialogue, ways of life unfamiliar to the middle class reader. It's that the author is able to make us see her characters from within, as they seen themselves, and thereby reveals the full individuality and humanity of women who have got short shrift both in literature and in life. That makes Pat Barker a feminist, a realist. It also makes her a wonderful writer.