



EXPLORING THE INNER WORLD OF CHARACTERS IN ANITA BROOKNER'S PROVIDENCE

Mr. Gund Kundalik Dnyandeo

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Karmaveer Mamasheeb Jagdale
Mahavidyalaya, Washi. Dist Osmanabad.

Corresponding Author- Mr. Gund Kundalik Dnyandeo

Email- kdgund@gmail.com

Abstract:

Exploring the inner world of characters by the novelist has become a trend in the recent era. With this the author provides an opportunity to the readers to peep into the mind of the characters. The suppressed emotions, dreams, hopes, aspiration etc. can be understood very well. Anita Brookner, a British novelist is no exception to this. Her writing provides glimpses from the inner world of the characters sketched by her. She can especially be referred to as an 'explorer' of inner life of her female characters. She is always very conscious about unravelling the inner turmoil and tension of her female characters. She gets interested in analysis and portrayal of human relationship. Thus she adopts novel as a vehicle for exploring the inner psyche of the characters. Her novels present before us many interesting female characters and take us to their inner world. This paper is a modest attempt to explore the inner world of the characters from her novel Providence.

Key words:- Inner-world, psychological, comparative, alienation, feminist etc.

Introduction

All the characters in the novel under investigation like Kitty, Marie, Vadim, Caroline, Bishop, The taxi driver and others suffer from a sense of isolation, loneliness that is not merely physical but also psychic. The novelist addresses women's issues extensively. The writer goes deeper into the psychological probing of the female characters so as to unravel their inner world. In the present novel Brookner undertakes a psychological analysis of the characters so as to reveal the inner world of the characters.

The novel deals with inner experiences of Kitty, who happens to be the protagonist of the work. The personal experiences of Kitty can be read from the feminist perspective because these are not only the personal experiences of Kitty but these echo the many women in any society. Through Kitty, Brookner tries to focus on the nature of the sensitive woman who struggles to live in the world.

The author's report of Kitty's mother's Married life is disturbing. Marie, her mother only can be seen in the workroom of the salon started by Kitty's

grandparents. Captain John Maule being the regular visitor of the salon is attracted to her. Even though the marriage takes place, it makes Marie mute. The untimely death of her husband makes her lonely. It happens before they celebrate their first marriage anniversary. Brookner makes the readers peep into the mind of the mother and understand the predicament of the widow of eighteen who gives birth to a baby girl who remains to be the backbone of her silent life. The grief of Marie is the result of displacement that can be seen in the novel time and again. The displacement of Marie with her daughter Kitty to the house at Chelsea aggravates the loneliness in their fate. Marie's widowhood has restored virginity to her. Kitty discloses her plight through the following words. Her mother "moved slowly about the flat, watering her plants, reading the romantic novels to which she was addicted ..." (13). The loneliness and emptiness make her to take shelter in the pages of books. Here one can understand the mental condition of both the daughter and the mother.

Death of Kitty's mother also makes the readers to feel the grief of her grandfather. Marie Therese dies quickly and quietly, one evening at the dinner table. About her mother's death Brookner writes, "It has been a strange and peaceful death, her mother collapsed in an armchair, her one small hand trailing through some fragments of walnuts shell. The scent of her grandmother's discarded fruit peel was still in Kitty's nostrils..." After the death of Marie, grandfather becomes silent and feels too old. Their living for, "My girls" (13) remains purposeless. The Phrase "My girls" underlines the working of the mind for the girls. The life seems purposeless to them and it seem to be a kind of burden for them. Brookner's narration of Vadim's vigorous and haphazard cooking; only when kitty comes at the weekends', speaks about his feelings for the family. Thus the arrival of Kitty cheers up their bleak fortitude and creates a happy mood. Kitty keeps on asking them questions concerning their times of yore in an exertion to animate them, she regards them, "as the loveliest people she had ever known" (15).

Kitty's mind is full of loneliness when she begins her research in the university. She lives in a flat for the sake of education but she always thinks of visiting her family at the weekends. As she approaches the station, she, "would see Vadim...pinching the fruits at the greengrocers to see if it was ripe and demanding to taste cheese smelling the fish at the fishmongers...part of her wished her English father was alive..."(13). Her mind always thinks of her English father on the backdrop of her Russian grandfather. The figure of her grandfather reminds her long lost father whom she has failed to meet. Thus Brookner evidently points out Kitty's yearning for her father.

Vadim, Kitty's grandfather's mind is explored in the novel. Being old, he hardly goes out of the flat. With Kitty's mention of "a little tour" (94), he reaches back into the past and broods over his visits to the market. Long since, he has stopped visiting shops for purchases.

Brookner narrates that he wants to fulfil, "...His desire to see the shops, the streets the people whom he so craved and whom he had abandoned without a murmur" (94). This is indication of his eagerness to go out changes his mood. Thus past memories can make one happy for the time being. His mind is thus full of hopes and dreams which he has cherished in his mind. The readers discern that Kitty's grandparents love was a stream of happiness for her. Her grandfather, Vadim, who is an enthusiastic cook, would shower his love in the form the different recipes. Brookner puts the love in her apt words, "He would put plates of food before her at odd times, urging her to taste his latest creation which was usually both pungent and idiosyncratic"(12).

Kitty is disturbed due to the death of her mother. She reminds her mother in her flat at Church Street where she longs for the company of her other. Bishop's reference to his love affair three years back, reminds her death of her mother that has taken place exactly three years back. She explores her mind, "Three years back Marie-Therese had dead, quickly, quietly, without benefit of clergy, without assurance of eternal comfort, her hands trilling among the walnuts shells" (58).

Different aspects such as the fearlessness, safety, comfort, etc. of which her mother has been the embodiment, gather in her mind, generating the feeling of loss. It is visible here that the memory of her loving mother is enough to make her happy. Her hunger for the customary and protected life is explicit in her own expressions. "I want to be a part of a real family. I want my father to be there and to shoot things...I want to wear jeans and old sweater belonging to my brother..." (59, 60). Her emotion is the emotion of those who are nostalgic for the old days.

Kitty's love affair also makes the readers to peep in the mental state of Kitty. She is in love with Maurice Bishop, an English professor. She is always happy in his company. She is seen thinking on the previous meetings, her preceding discussions and telephone conversations with Maurice. Brookner narrates that she longs to watch, "the handsome smiling

figure mounting the steps to the platform..." (19). It is evident how she yearns for the lecture of Bishop who debates on the history and cathedrals of England. Bishop's frequently visits her flat and it is a mark of his attraction for Kitty. But he is devoted to his study rather than Kitty. Brookner writes, "He was in her kitchen discussing over the maps of the Cathedrals in France. She was gazing at his head. She had seen him like this for so many times still she long to see the longish brown hair, and the skin healthy with the country hair of his weekend at home, the clear green eyes..." (24). These statements make it clear the emotions she cherishes in her mind.

When he departs to London leaving her behind, she is more attracted to him. Brookner voices her unvoiced feelings: 'Maurice, will you not look at my direction? I am only here for your sake I do not, I confess, care about the new building, or even believe in it...You have done so much for me. I want to be excellent, for you....all this delights me because we are in the same room and sharing the same experience. I shall remember a day like this, although you will not. You have more important things to remember. Will you not meet my eye?' (32). This prolonged mute appeal to Maurice, who hardly notices her, sheds light on the mental platform of Kitty. The end of the novel is quiet shocking and unexpected. Kitty's dreams about marrying Bishop shatter to pieces when she notices that she is rejected by Bishop, being half French from her mother's side and half English from her father. In addition, she is shocked to see that he has selected Jane Fairchild, an English girl, her student, as his wife. Another blow comes in the form of the news of his transfer to the University of Oxford, and she has been appointed as the staff of Redmill. This kind end of the novel makes us brood over the mental shock of Kitty.

Among other minor characters, the taxi driver's mind is also explored in the novel. He has driven Kitty to places While taking Kitty to the party of Maurice in the final phase of the novel in his car, his talk about his past days and his farming

displays his feelings, he says, "I don't expect you will be seeing me much longer" (179). He adds, "Thinking of trying my luck out there again" (179). This indicates that the driver was going to undertake his earlier profession which he appreciates and Brookner has nicely exposed his mind.

Another character Caroline, feels lonely for the accurate gentleman to emerge. Her shopping or sitting in a restaurant to pass the time and interfering Kitty's flat most of the time explores her loneliness. On Kitty's return from Paris, Caroline is relieved of her loneliness. Caroline says, "Thank God, You are here...I've been dying of boredom ...It must have been marvellous in the country. You are lucky, Kitty. Nobody asks me out now." (152). Here one can see the emotions of Caroline. She wants to enjoy the outward life once she has enjoyed. This makes her sad. She is lonely after the divorce. Brookner has aptly unveiled her curtailed from her mind.

To conclude, it can be seen that the major and minor characters have equally been given justice by Brookner. The novel provides glimpses from the inner world of the characters sketched by her. So she is rightly referred to as an 'explorer' of inner life of her characters. The inner turmoil, tensions, hopes, dreams, desires, relationships, emotions of love, sorrow and happiness etc. have been ably brought to the surface. It gives readers an idea of the sufferings of human beings in general. It also makes the readers to think over the possible ways to minimize the suffering and make their world comfortable enough.

References:

1. Brookner, Anita. *The Providence*. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1982.
2. Skinner, John. *The Fictions of Anita Brookner: Illusions of Romance*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan. 1992.