

A Demon Transformed as an Angel in Ajay K Pandey's *A Girl to Remember*

S. Missba , *M.Phil. English*

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.

Affiliated to M.S University. Tirunelveli.

1995missba@gmail.com

Abstract:

Every living being in the world whether it is an animal or human, have two sides in their, one is good which can be consider as an “Angel” and another is an evil which is known as “Demon”. Demon is an image of a protagonist in the novel “*A Girl to Remember*” by Ajay K. Pandey. He discusses about the importance of human feelings and emotions. All men and women have two different personalities, one is positive and another is negative. The negative plays the vital role in the society, because currently the society is filled with self-centred by nature. These people live for their own needs or comforts and are not ready to serve for the society. The mentality of the people is fully pressed with their obsessions. For instance, family has become nuclear, and their children, who are living far away has adapted according their working place culture. The intimacy between the family members, the culture and the tradition also has reduced and changed. Due to this change, parents could not accept their children as a moderate person and changed in generation wise too. In recent times women are consider as a doll, which used to play with their feelings and emotions.

Key words: Gender, Society, Importance of Family and Relationships.

Gender is constructed in an individual, interactional, and structural ways to create an environmental constraints and opportunities that usually value men more than women. Gender is the term first used by Ill Mathews in 1984 in her study of the construction of femininity. Gender is a social constructed term which

has specified nature and meaning. It is a concept that human creates socially, it is demonstrated by the fact that individuals, groups, and society. This social system constructs women as a subordinate or secondary position which moves their stake at next level. It is related to the culture as expectations about the attributes and behaviours appropriate to women or men about relationship between men and women; it can be termed as or says in other words, gender is shaped by a culture. Gender equality is the concept that is familiar by its name.

Ajay Kumar Pandey nurtured up in the modest NTPC township of Rihand Nagar. He had been forced to study Engineering in Electronics at the IERT (Institute of Engineering and Rural Technology) Allahabad. The unemployed graduation had sent him to Pune for MBA in IIMM (Indian Institute of Modern Management). He is currently working with Cognizant, Pune. His dream is to become as a teacher, but destiny pushed him into IT field. Travelling, trekking and reading novels are his hobbies. His first action had blossomed under the title *You are the Best Wife (2015)*, *Her Last Wish (2017)*, *You are the Best Friend (2017)*. His fourth book is “*A Girl to Remember*” which is published in 2018. He touched many hearts with his writings, and continues to write the stories of love which happens in the true life.

School is considered as the miniature of the society. In school, students are treated equally, but for some basis or the other many issues go on in school also. Teachers are considered as second mothers for the students, but in this novel, a teacher is a self-centered person, it indicates that he is the only person to rule his own life so that he describes himself as a “Demon”. Every person has some evil qualities inside them, ‘Neel’ the protagonist, “In every angel, a demon hides, and in every demon, an angel strides” is the quote by Ajay in “*A Girl to Remember*”.

Neel works as a Math teacher in DAV Private School, Pune, who lives in staff quarters. So he does not need much money and he manages his expenses with what he earns. He shares all his feelings with his one and only friend Aarav, who works as an English teacher in the same school. He helps him all the time when he is in trouble. But, Neel is not the person to sacrifice anything for others; he does not have any sentiment, emotions and feelings towards his family and friends. Three incidents reveal his demonic character.

During his school time he draws his teacher's image on the desk as a 'nude' one. All the faculties in his school opposed him, but his mother supported him and appreciated him. "The art is so good. Neel couldn't possibly draw so well" ("*A Girl to Remember*" 65). His mother did not leave alone him in teacher's hand, she supported him and as well as a woman she reacted for this incident in their home. This was his first incident which he does not know that he did was wrong. His mother added the note of his character, from where he went wrong, but he does not do anything or he is not able to help him on that situation. He came to Delhi to meet his mother as a suspended school teacher who needs money from his mother. When he says about his flashback story of his childhood, the readers understand that he has some attraction towards the female body. Usually he plays with Barbie doll where other boys play with some cars and other games. He does not have many friends to be close with them, due to his father's job he and his family moved from place to place.

He does not feel bad for his irresponsible behavior. Often he asked money from his mother, during that time his mother came to know about the full mind of Neel. While watching the television, when some kissing scene appears, he does not feel shy but he feels hesitant to watch those scenes in-front of his mother and he exposes some bad opinion towards the body of women. During that time his mother replies him with special notes, "A woman is a mother, a sister, a friend, a daughter to someone. You will come to understand these relationships better when you become a father or a husband. A relationship is the mother of all feelings. You will realize that she is not just a body, she is much more than that" (77).

The second incident, he and his Elder brother's (Nikhil) wife Neha have illegal relationship. At this point Neel does not respect his family values, and kills the true relationship of his brother, later on Neha feeling guilty shares everything with her husband, and he forgives her. After that incident they leave their house and settle down in Mumbai. His brother does not have any contact with Neel.

The third incident, which is known as the vital plot of this novel, is considered as the main incident because he make some move towards the situation. Pihu, a school girl, studies in the same school were Neel works. When Neel has a problem she is the only person to offer her hands towards him by accommodating him into her house. His demon character starts to come out, due to her mother. He starts to dream about

Pihu's mother Annu, who works as a nurse. Neel has an eye towards her but she does not know anything about him. He felt some suspicious things towards their house, because of Pihu's attitudes over him. He got suspended for some issues in his school because of Ananya, he took math tuition which was against the school rule so he got suspend, after that he resigned his job. But Ananya had some feeling towards him, she spread rumours that she and Neel were in affair.

This made Neel's life tough, and he does not feel comfortable in Pihu's place, because Pihu asks him to do something or other like playing carom, and reading some sort of novels. When she requests for math tuition, first he refused it afterwards accepts it for Annu. He went to her place for taking tuition, not only for Pihu, the main intention of him to make or to achieve Annu's attraction towards him. Every night Neel and Annu meet each other in their terrace, but Neel did not care for her emotions, his intention was to become close with her. This time he knew that he was wrong, while taking tuition to Pihu he noticed her father's picture in their room and after that he came to know that he is also one of the teacher and a member of DAV private School.

He shares this information with Aarav and asks him to collect the information of her father from the school. Aarav also gathered the information; the information was a surprise for Neel because he is looking like Pihu's father and so they have helped him. But this resemblance became convenient for Neel to be close with Annu, he did not care for any one, this made Aarav fume towards him. Aarav tried his utmost to make him to realize the values of families and the true relationship which is surrounded by him. When he came to Pune with some money where he get from his mother, he and Aarav wasted the money for buying drugs to have some happiness. During this time, Aarav realized his mistake when he came forward to help Neel, he did not give any response to him.

And the turning point of his life came at the end from the Angel Pihu, she is the only person to mark him as an angel and she has the habit of bed time story, her mother tells her a story everyday, because of her illness her mother does not hurt her "Neel was here to make thing right. I believe, Neel is the angel." (161). When she is playing with Neel she faints and Neel helps her to gain conscious. After that Neel comes to know that Pihu is suffering from Thalassemia due to the genetic disorder she is going to die after few months,

he neither has sympathy nor love for her but tries to get close to her mother Annu. One fine day Pihu comes to Neel and gives him a gift but he scolds her and asks her to get out from the place, so she keeps the gift on the table, after she went out, he throws it out to the dustbin. While he is lying in the bed, something strikes him and he takes out the gift given by her. It is a great surprise for him, because she has given him a greeting card with lots of love:

“Hi Neel Sir,

Because of you, I believe in angels...

Happy Father’s Day!” (177).

The word ‘Father’ made him to realize his mistake and after that he comes forward to love Pihu as his daughter. As he had an interview in Goa, he went there, but he had some thinking about Pihu and her health condition, so that he calls her mother Annu once in every hour, but this time he does not need any situation to merge with her because he had changed his mind towards positive and now his only intention is to take care of Pihu’s health. While he returns from Goa he visits his mother in Mumbai, but Neha is alone in the house. He stands outside the house and gives her the chain which he has stolen long.

When he returns to Pune, Pihu is counting her last minute he comes forward and tells his story Pihu makes him realize the mistakes that he also has some qualities of angel, but he mentioned him as a demon to Pihu.

I was losing hope of redemption when I finally got the signal I was dying for. Her limp hand was finally clutching mine.

I finished, delicately hugging my daughter to my heart, crying my soul out to her. I cried after many years and washed off all my guilt with it. I didn’t care about the world; I only cared about Pihu when I said, ‘Please forgive me, my daughter. Please forgive your demon...’ (206).

At last Neel comes to know about the values and importance of the family. His mother became very happy, Nikhil also forgives his younger brother. The people around him love him a lot but he did not have the capacity to understand their feelings and he has been an easy going person. The love of Pihu turns him into an angel. In the world there is no ‘Demon’ are consider as an Angel’ but the situation makes them to do wrong things and having bad taught. But his mother felt happy about his son that his second change a lot and her intention and child birth and growth were not went wrong. Neel realized his mistakes “A true confession is the biggest punishment” (207). All the people have confessed him and they all are happy at the end.

Works Cited

Pandey, Ajay Kumar. *A Girl to Remember*. Srishti Publishers, New Delhi. 2018.

Print.

www.goodreads.com. Accessed. 27, Aug. 2019.