

THEMES, STYLES AND TECHNIQUES OF AJAY K PANDEY IN HIS NOVEL *HER LAST WISH*

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Abstract

Among Indian English writers, Ajay K Pandey is a recognized contemporary Indian fiction writer best known for the writing of *You are the Best Wife* and *You are the Best Friend* is an autobiographical novel. It charmed many hearts and inspired several others to live every moment love, peace and happiness. *Her Last Wish* is his second novel. Ajay shared his autobiographical elements through the characters in the novel. This book is dedicated to HIV patients. Here Ajay K Pandey's writing proves that he is such a great writer. Ajay uses various themes as love, family, friendship, death, sacrifice and humanity. He uses more techniques as flashback techniques, stream of consciousness, imaginary, symbolism, plot construction, characterization and eminent styles in this novel. His narrative voice is elegant, bitter, sweet and gentle. Ajay uses more Indian words in the novel to create a best atmosphere. He is a popular writer not only for this twenty first century but also forever.

Key words: Love, family, death, sacrifice, flashback techniques, diction, stream of consciousness and styles.

Ajay K Pandey is a recognized contemporary Indian fiction writer best known for his autobiographical novels. He is a winner in writing heart touching stories in very simple yet beautiful. *Her Last Wish* is his second book. Ajay portrays all his characters in good manner. Ajay keeps the language uncomplicated and engages the reader through his characters. Most of his characters are ordinary people with ordinary lives and hence they resonate with today's youth and general masses. The use of style is realistic and simple. *Her Last Wish* makes good reading and touching the heart of the readers. His narrative voice is elegant, bitter, sweet and gentle. Ajay has used his own art, themes, creativity, craft, technique, style, structure to bring out the aesthetic qualities in the novel.

In literature, writing style is the manner of expressing thoughts in language characteristic. Beyond the essential elements of spelling, grammar and punctuation, writing style is the choice of words, sentence structure and paragraph structure used to cover the meaning effectively. Diction, or the choice of word, is obviously a central element in every writer's style. Although good diction is partly a matter of trial and error, of tinkering with sentences until they sound right, it is also a matter of following certain general preferences that careful readers and writers tend to share.

Style is the embodiment of writers' vision. Ajay K Pandey's experiments in style and presentation became innovative with each successive work. He writes in a realistic and simple style. He uses to write a simple language. The language is simple and flow enjoyable. The novel *Her Last Wish* makes good reading and touches the heart. His stories are painful yet beautiful. His books are based on or inspired by true elements. Ajay K Pandey's works are full of life

lessons and general wisdom. Matthew Arnold says, "People think that I can teach them style. What stuff it all is! Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style." (Web)

Style in literature is the literary element that describes the way that the writer uses words, the author's word choice, sentence structure, figurative language and sentence arrangement etc. The language of the books is simple and easy to comprehend, thus made it easier to connect with the readers. *Her Last Wish* gives some serious relationship goals to the readers and even provides respite and hope to those who have suffered the loss of loved ones. Ajay's style is a reflection of his personality. His book swipes right into the heart of the reader.

The word 'technique' is derived from the Greek word tekne which means art and artifice. The hypothetical Indo-European root of the word tekth means to weave, to build or to join. This word derived from the Greek word tekhn means a carpenter. Similarly texture means to weave, to build. Thus, the word in its original form meant an applied art whether of building a house or of weaving a piece of cloth. And from usage in such practical art the term words from the 'practical' world of uses. As an artisan or skilled worker uses some tools, methods and devices in producing an object etc, similarly a literary artist has to use some tools, devices, and methods in creating a literary work. In modern English the word technique means a way of a carrying out a particular task, especially the execution of an artistic work or a scientific procedure. As Flanbert has pointed out in Anita Desai's fictional technique,

... the word technique in the context of literature has a wide scope of meaning.

When a novelist writes a novel he conveys his theme with the help of a story

which consists of certain events taking place through certain characters. And since the novel is a verbal form so the story is to be narrated. Narrating a story is a primitive instinct and literature of every language,... Over the years, narrative skill or craft of fiction developed. In the late nineteenth century French critic Flanbert gave the famous dictum that “the artist is like God present everywhere but seen no where”... (A Critical Study of the novels of Anita Desai, 65)

In fictional work since the writer creates character and he knows everything, objectivity and artistic detachment demand that he should not take sides with characters. Generally the novelist enters in the mind of different characters and reveals their process to the reader. Imaginary, symbolism, point of view, chronological order of events, stream of consciousness, dialogue, language, characterization, and plot are some other aspects of fictional techniques and rely on technical innovations.

This is an attempt to analyze the techniques employed by the writer in this novel *Her Last Wish*. An eminent novelist Ajay K Pandey is well known for his artistic execution rightly proves his deep interest in the art of fictional technique. He is an excellent in writing the novel with varied techniques. He uses the techniques keeping the readers in mind and has achieved success in it. He uses various devices to create an aesthetic effect in the novel. *Her Last Wish* has a remarkable technical competence.

Ajay K Pandey's invariable stories mingle with the current events. Here also, the novel traces the conflicting emotions and feelings which go through being a HIV patient and

illegitimate child. Astha could not aspire to live a normal life with human relationships, feelings and emotions.

In this novel Ajay K Pandey casts a spell through his writing. His words flow swiftly, sweeping readers along; at that times they whisper softly, tempting, at others they thunder emphatically, daring. Throughout the fiction, Ajay K Pandey uses his mastery of rhythm to create unforgettable character and weave story that are both exotic and familiar, at once fresh and universal.

Ajay K Pandey's language and narrative techniques are essentially right for this purpose. This art of the novel is appreciated by its technique. Ajay K Pandey uses varied technique in his novel as plot, style, creativity, romance, pathos, characterization, narrative techniques, humanity, curiosity, trauma etc.

Ajay K Pandey has used his own art, craft, technique, style, format and structure. He has a gift of storytelling. He has created a wonderful well-plotted story. The narration of the story is unique. His narrative voice is elegant, bitter, sweet and gentle. The best thing about the novel is its variety in narration. It is right from the name of the title and protagonist's dream to fulfill his wife's wishes, the author continued his readers with his prose in emotion.

The title *Her Last Wish* is apt to the story. The protagonist wife's last wish is this novel. "“Her last wish is,” he ignored my question and said, “a Bestseller Book.””(206). Astha is no more so her husband Vijay writes this novel for her. "“Don't worry papa. I will write a book. I will fulfill her last wish...” (206).

Ajay K Pandey's *Her Last Wish* employs the first – person or peripheral narrative method. Here the narrator is the central character of the novel. The storyteller recounts events from their own point of view using the first person “I”, “My” etc for the singular first person and “we”, etc for the plural first person. “I disembarked the Goa express at Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station in Delhi after a long journey of thirty-two hours, through I didn't look even half as tired.” (1)

A narrative or mode of storytelling in which the narrator appears as the ‘I’ recollecting his or her own part in the events related, either as a witness of the action or as an important participant in it. The term is most often used of novels such as Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), in which the narrator is also the central character. The term does not mean that the narrator speaks only in the first person, of course: in discussions of other characters, the third person will be used. (The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms 141)

Her Last Wish is divided into more chapters. All the chapters in the novel are logically connected. It runs into 207 pages. It seems to be the smallest Indian novel in English about HIV, The protagonist narrates the novel. Ajay used separate chapter division technique, that the main subdivision of the book. There are subdivision chapters in the novel; they are narrated by the other characters of the novel. The chapter divisions are in the title as “Sargam Speaks” (38), “From Vijay's Father” (64), “From Vijay's Mother” (155), “From Vijay's Mother II” (158), “Daniel Speaks” (184), “Daniel Speaks II” (188), “Vijay's Father speaks Acknowledgements”

(207. Every chapter is in the first person narration “I”. “I am Vijay’s mom. I think it’s better ...” (155)

Ajay K Pandey uses the epistolary technique of novel writing. This technique thus makes the literary piece a real experience for the readers. The characters feelings and thoughts are shown clearly in this technique. “Tuesday, June 2010” (1). Astha’s letter to Vijay is memorable one in the novel. “Hi Vijay,” (200). Ajay K Pandey used the article publication techniques in the novel as story of Astha as “A truly inspiring and eye-opening story of a pregnant HIV positive woman – Page -16” (167) in the college magazine. “Hi, I am Astha. I am an HIV patient.” (167). Sanjay’s letter to the readers is also an emotional climax to the novel. “Dear reader,” (207).

Another remarkable trait in Ajay K Pandey’s work is its absolute Indianess. The scenes, characters, situations and language reflect Indian culture. The language he uses suits to his purpose. His language is simple and lucid without ambiguity. Like Mulk Raj Anand he too makes use of Indianism to give it a tingle of Indianess to the novel. He uses Indian words such as “parchee” (122), “paan” (123), “Chhota Parivar Sukhi Parivar” (126), “Beta” (159), “Khambha” (194), “Aprajita” (204) etc mentioned in the novel.

Ajay K Pandey uses more abbreviations in the novel. The abbreviations are “HIV” (4), “AIDS” (4), “TV” (8), “Asst. Prof.” (10), “IPS” (15), “IAS” (17), “HOD” (32), “PCS” (66), “SC”(67), “OBC” (67), “USA”(89), “Kilo”(98), “INC” (102) etc in the novel. Ajay K Pandey is a trend setter he knows well to attract the youngsters through his way of writing so he used famous people “Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam” (81), “Mona Lisa” (81) and other Bollywood heroes’ “Amitabh Bachan” (25), “Shahrukh Khan” (40) and “Salman Khan” (203) names in the novel.

Ajay K Pandey uses flashback techniques in this novel. Flashback is a scene that takes place before a story begins. In the novel *Her Last Wish* the past life of Astha and Vijay is narrated by the characters. Astha's past life is explained by her friend Sargam. "We had studied together after our fifth standard. Astha had had a terrible childhood." (38) Through Astha's diary also revealed her past life to her husband "After half an hour of searching through all her belongings, I finally caught hold of a red diary." (54)

Flashbacks interrupt the chronological order of the main narrative to take a reader back in time to the past events in a character's life. A writer uses this literary device to help readers better understand present-day elements in the story or learn more about the character. Whether it's a vivid memory or a dream sequence, a flashback scene is a window to an earlier occurrence that provides critical information to the story. (Web)

Moreover the novelist reflects the culture and traditions of Indians. Ajay K Pandey shows the Indian way of marriage. "An extraordinary profile with fancy details created on online matchmaking forums. Brahmin boy ... I hated most of the above mentioned details as I knew the truth of it all, but liked the last line which was in bold – **No Dowry**." (7) The half truth and half false profile for matchmaking are normal in India. The suffering of middle class family in search of their partner is also well portrayed in the novel.

The weather condition of India is also explained by the protagonist in the novel. "Delhi was boiling at this time of the year, as if the sun was taking revenge from the delhiites." (1) Ajay K Pandey has used many places of Delhi in the novel. The places are "Hazrat Nizamuddin

Railway station” (1), “Gurgoan” (8), “Malviya Nagar” (25), “Vijay Dinanth Chauhan” (25), “Agnipath” (25), “Noida” (204) etc. Some other states of India are also mentioned in the novel. They are “Goa” (1), “Allahabad” (5) etc. Some other countries are also mentioned in the novels. The countries are US, South Africa etc. The Government Hospital’s condition is also explained in the novel. “I reached the hospital’s OPD counter where queue numbers were allotted to the patients. There was a vast sea of people. There were ten counters and each had about a hundred people in queue.” (122)

Ajay K Pandey uses many medical tests and treatments in the novel. The medical tests are “I guessed it included a complete blood profile test, involving thyroid, metolic, pregnancy, H++, haemogolobin, ultrasound, TLC, CD3 and CD4 cell count, urine culture, CT Scan, X-Ray, kidney tests , among others.” (85)

Here Ajay K Pandey has been artistically aware of the effectiveness of the quotations – a way of knowing a character through the words and thoughts of that character. And his quotations are very simple and meaningful. For example, Astha is counting her last days. “Even in that condition, she replied: “Always try to represent yourself as ‘happy’, because one day it becomes your personality.’” (149)

Ajay K Pandey also uses the themes of love, care, family, marriage, friendship, romance, hope, trust, humanity and sacrifice - story telling as a way of healing. Thus, Ajay K Pandey employs all the techniques and gives wonderful novel to his readers.

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