

# A Collage Impulse of Psychological Crippling to Multiplot Surviving in Preeti Shenoy's Novel Life Is What You Make IT

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## ABSTRACT

*The map of Literature confines itself from the modernist, competitive and 'catching up' perspective that women are holistic, nurturing and rebellious in mind and heart in Preeti Shenoy's Novel 'Life Is What You Make It'. The author throws her weight behind a far more inclusive conception of 'What would you do if destiny twisted the road you took'? What if it threw you to a place you did not want to go? Would you fight, run, or accept the inequity, exploitation, or psychic disorder? Life is the source of what*

*we make are living and dying. The paper tints the art of 'You' in the life of Ankita Sharma from Past (Bipolar Disorder in Mind) to Present (The Will Power of Belief in Her Self) an indomitable spirit that can overcome even the mysterious threats destiny throws at 'You'. The research undertaken is the study of How Psychological trauma in one's self can fraction itself to the journey of Change, A secret "Never to belittle love, no matter where it came, be humbler, nicer, kinder, be who you are, no matter how crude it makes you," never resist from your opinions and*

*choices, as "Life is What You Yourself Make It" with sanity and self determined strength, designing your Life out of the real Collage of Existence and Living.*

#### Taboos of Humanistic Psychology:

Humanistic Psychology is a perspective that arose as an answer to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and B.F Skinner's behaviourism.[1] Humanistic Psychology evolved from the age of Renaissance with the roots of Socrates excavating an individual's self – actualization, the process of expressing one's strengths and creativity out of depression. This theory is a spiritual aspiration of human psyche delving out of suffering, striving to build one's self identity and the stigma of human potential. This theory is a chain emerging from the field of transpersonal psychology.[3][4] The humanistic psychology is jotted by five prime principles in an article written by James Bugental in 1964[11] and

followed by Tom Greening,[12] editor of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology.

Humanistic Psychology is an area that deals with concepts of depth therapy, holistic health, sensitive minds, self-divestment, marital breakups, and Positive Psychology. The major theorists considered to have prepare the base are Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Rollo May. The psychology of humanism can itself be critiqued as being insensitive to issues of power and social context. Psychologists believed that all human beings are basically creative and imbibe the humanistic values within no matter they are drenched in agony. Their ultimate focus was on the meaning of experience to the individual, and on the experiencing individual.

The vital purpose of Humanistic therapy focussed on the qualities of choice, and realization of self. This theory drew forth the problems that every individual

faced, and their meaning of being human again, with dignity and interest in the development of every person (Krippner & Murphy, Fall, 1973).

Unexplained spells of Bipolarity in Ankita's Life:

*Life is what you make it* by Preeti Shenoy elucidates the story with a belief that life is the biggest teacher of all. The protagonist Ankita Sharma sways in her twenty's and travels from past to present all day and night. The novel is narrated in a sequence where the past of our life is haunted in the present living. The story flashes the memories of Vaibhav whom she loved, and sneaked against her parents wish and guess love for her was like this. As time passes by she is a grown up adult doing her Master's degree, where the turnaround in her character is quite stunning, competitive, perfectionist deeds, ambitious, and determined.

Her academics bloom out in great success with real hard work and sincerity, where suddenly her parents sighs her love letters hidden for years into the blazing fire, as she stands there in tears seeing them turn into ashes. She remembers the words, "Say no more," he wrote me. "There are no buts and no ifs in life. Life is what you make it, Ankita. I am willing to wait for you forever. That is how much I care." Sometimes decisions that are taken in the nick of a moment are the ones that have the power to affect a whole train of events that follow. This was the moment when destiny changed Ankita's life. She underwent more than a mood swing called bipolar disorder or manic-depression. This disorder ranges from extremes in energy to deep despair.

Ankita's life had become imbalanced just like her brain indicating neurotransmitters that shocked all her family and friends, her relation with Abhi

came in picture with many incidents, promises, secrets, as they lived through thick and thin. There's a saying Death wants a plea, when give it a chance, and this chance was given by Abhi, who drowned Ankita in the whirlpool of guilt and the very reason for his eternal sleep. The death of Abhi struck her saying, "I don't want to see a bloated body. I have seen him when he was alive and well and those shall be my last memories." I said. I hated myself for it. Yet I could not bring myself to go. My inner voice was screaming out the answers blaming me, but silenced it, not allowing it to rise up, not wanting to hear it.

#### Collage of Psychological crippling and Postpartum Depression:

Everyone, at various times in life, feels sad or "blue". It's normal to feel sad on occasion but sometimes this sadness comes from things that happen in our life: Depression is not a character flaw or an

individual weakness. Many women feel guilty about being depressed when they have to be happy. Such depression lays its threat on Ankita as she becomes a victim of postpartum depression blabbering all time about Abhi's loss as she states,

"I wish I had told him that I would keep in touch. I wished I had told him that a part of me still loved him. I wish I had assured him that we would meet when I visited Cochin once a year for holidays. I wished a hundred million times. I wished a hundred million things." [chptr 7]

The idea of being herself had drifted slowly, she could not face people, and she had no idea what she was doing. It was the first time she realised that she could not trust her own self anymore. Victims of bipolar disorder experience absent madness, or unconsciousness in deeds. Every night she blinked away tears of shame that welled up her eyes, threatening to fall. The pain was almost physical, it

was an absurd heart with dead mind, aching for Abhi, a feeling never wanted to let go, just see him, hear his voice, smile at him, where death can never tangle him.

A huge dark void occupied Ankita's mind where nothing existed anymore, she cut her skin slightly and felt better as the pain was then real. She could bear this. Her parent had no idea of her ignorance, but was happy that this one thing they could do nothing about.

"This was my body and I could do what I wanted with it. It was a strange kind of defiance. It was a way of showing them for what they did with my letters. Each letter was screaming as it burnt, "Save me, save me, please let me live". But I was silent as I watched each one dying a slow painful death." [Chptr 8]

Something was born and something died from that very second, she could not give it a name, maybe it was her soul. Or maybe it was a part of her destiny that deformed her to psychological depression

in life. Ankita questioned how could she land up in a mental hospital?

"I HATE YOU. BOTH OF YOU. COME BACK HERE- DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS- YOU'RE MY PARENTS DAMMIT." "WHY THE FUCK DID YOU GIVE BIRTH TO ME? COME BACK DAMMIT- COME BACK," [Chptr 19]

Her journey in the mental hospital doomed her at first but later a faint fluttering ray of hope had begun stirring, when Ankita met Dr. Madhusudan who treated her gently, and drew his personal life with her attempt of committing suicide. He says, "Life is a gift, we should not throw it away. You have no right to kill others. Then how can you have a right to kill yourself?" [Chptr 20]

It was a seed that he had sown and it had taken firm root. First time in many months, I thought about the future, and what other things I could do? Dr. Madhusudan was her lifeline whom she wanted all time, her

face lit up with a smile. It was the first time in months she had ever smiled. Ankita began to live painting her emotions experienced been joyous and hopeful

Multiplet surviving of Faith in herself:

The enormity of Ankita's life was speeding to the next level of hope, with the words of her doctor spreading in her mind like sunrise after sunset. Sometimes all one needs is a strong anchor, a heart that can comfort you for no reason, who wins your trust blindly, who leads you on the busiest road carefully, follows you when you're lost. "To me Dr. Madhusudan was that person, whose presence calmed me, words reassured me completely. Faith is indeed a strange and a powerful thing that can work miracles." [Chptr 21] And she soon discovered it. The life of psychological suffering groomed Ankita to overcome this crippling to a new level of Multipet surviving as she states,

"Spending time in a mental health Institution makes you a hundredfold

more sensitive towards others than you were earlier. You learn to value emotions. You adapt to look out for others. You learn to truly care. Most specifically you learn to pay heed to what others do not tell you." [chptr22]

Every day and night Ankita wrote out passages she read from the children books, to remember what she read. Six weeks passed by where she noticed she no longer needed to write as she remembered, as though someone told her. The real thrill she lived, dancing and shouting out to the world telling, "Look I am able to read! Look I am able to remember!" [Chptr22]

Finally time came for her to leave the mental hospital after all her therapy sessions, and Dr. Madhusudan had observed a remarkable progress as it was her strong will, to fight her bipolar disorder, and tremendous power in bringing back her lost senses to read and write. The element of Humanism is found in the relation between Ankita and her

doctor, where he supports her emotionally, understands her, and patiently bears her meniscal attitudes.

Humanistic Psychology in Every Women's life:

The study of Humanistic Psychology in terms of Women clearly defines how women are emotional and effective, and how they undergo the process of family connectivity. Humanistic quality can be called as "modernity's groundlessness" [Weil, 1999], being disembodied, lacking place and body. The world of psychology was a prominent environment for women. Many women around the world answered the call to human ways. Their spirit of colliding with new people, of knowing and being was the hallmark of successful will power to life. For eg, Laura Perls, brought women's responsibility into an active experiential process" [Serlin, 1992]

In recent years to the well-known *Women's Ways of Knowing* [Belenki et.

Al, 1986], A group of women who extended their attention to knowledge, Difference and Power [Goldberger et. al, 1996]. Women's arena of knowing is supported by their psychology of connected knowing. This knowing is defined as empathy, by Carl Rogers's way of knowing another through connection, and experiencing that him or her in real. In the novel *Life is What You Make It* Ankita connects with few significant people, her parents, and Dr. Madhusudan who taught her the process of being open laying "aside all perceptions from the external frame of reference"[Rogers,1951, p. 29].

'The Self' is another part which functions in any psychological survival or suffering, the self here is not lived in isolation, but an interaction with others and "self-insertion" into experience [Elbow, 1973, p. 149]. Feminist Psychology with humanism exposes that self is not a solitary entity, but is present only in relationship. The 'self' itself, is the

instrument in psychotherapy and in research. Finally self is not a stable or static object, but is a “self- in- process”, created and recreated in the context of any relationship [Polkinghorne,]. Ankita and her parents build a dialogical bridge of transforming an “It” to “Thou” a space of meaning. The novel jots the journey of a lady who has suffered mental depression and freed to view life with the therapy of Humanism and feeling. Ankita survives her depression with this feeling as it allows one to feel oneself into the world of the other [Goldberger, 1996, p. 224]. She felt her world into the world of Dr. Madhusudan and her parents as she says,

“I owe you a lot. You have taught me the value of life, and you have showed me how love and time are the greatest gifts one can receive. There was a time when I could not read nor write; now I can hold them dearer than life itself. To me, this is the greatest gift I can ever give and receive from you”. [Chptr 23]

Humanistic psychology deals with all persons and their basic human rights: their right to be treated as individuals with great dignity and respect; the freedom of choice, the right to holistic development of their talents and abilities, followed by the society of a cultural evolution of humankind. It challenges us to go beyond experience and from liberation to transformation for the better [Leslie, 1999; Jacklin, 1987].

As time passed by Ankita’s parents observed how life had changed for their depressed daughter. “I was sure of what I wanted in life. Life is too precious to not do the things one wanted to”. Every day awakened her to learn something of her parents as they realised how important friends were in her life, how writing was something she had taken for granted earlier, but now she valued each word not less than a gem. Her fondness to read and write increased her thinking calibre and all



she wanted was to read how many times she wanted.

Life is what You Make It with Human Connections:

The paper explores the two counterparts of suffering and survival in the life of Ankita. And also applies the theory of Humanism on the psyche of people affected by bipolar disorder, family suppression, the self between sanity and insanity. The research questions who is to decide that someone is insane and others are 'normal'? The finding is the true relation one can have or experience in seeing yourself into others. Ankita truly responded to life after being someone whom she never was, but became human when 'love of writing and faith in the words of Dr. Madhusudan, "Mark my words, you will do well." worked miracles on her mind, heart and body. She was no longer the same girl who worried about people's opinions, as she knew this is the

world she lived in, as the same world she cared no more.

Ankita felt proud of herself, as she sucked the pure air she breathed coming back to life, rejoicing the sensation of what life has given her? And yet to give? Celebrating the moments being alive, in a new world, new friends, new self, believing, that day something died to recreate a celebration of your Life, that is permanent, and would last not just for time but for all ages. A true saying, 'The world is indeed a better place when there is love, friendship, acceptance, and hope. Powered by these, we can overcome anything, including the mysterious destiny'.

Life is what you yourself churn it, no matter how much charged with punishments, burdened inside gates, tortured by horror mates, wrath and tears, smiles and cheers, where I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.

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