

CELESTE NG'S LYDIA: A BIOPHILIC PERSONAGE IN EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU

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Abstract

Over millennia, people have moved across social, cultural, and geographic boundaries in quest of better opportunities. In prehistoric periods, communities wandered about in quest of a favorable natural environment; subsequently, it is established in agriculture in which the communities travelled around in search of greater possibilities and shelter. Having a diverse exposure in diaspora Celest Ng, who has consistently worked to highlight the multicultural sensibility of her characters via the use of a variety of elements including culture, mythology, and environment as a source of solace. Ng has mapped out the relationship between the émigré heroine Lydia and the ordinary problems that other immigrants face in her acclaimed literary work *Everything I Never Told*. Through the use of nature and environment, which serve as the fundamental characteristics of all living and non-living survivals in this domain, Lydia serves as a connecting connection between diasporas and the motherland. It establishes the framework for social civilization's expansion and advancement. Since flora and wildlife are fundamental to human survival, they have a wide range of effects on people everywhere. Having taken the theories of environmental psychologist Tim Kasser and the ideas of eco-critics such as Emerson and Thoreau, the study aims to analyze "Everything I Never Told You", as a key to vent the emotions of Diaspora leading to the commit suicide

Keywords: *Diaspora, Lake, Nature, Psychology, Water*

1. Introduction

Human beings have a natural tendency to find comfort in nature. It is customary to find strength, inspiration, and consolation in natural world. However, humans have been destroying the environment for centuries. Though being given extensive information given on how to live alongside nature without oppressing it. Diaspora cultures have had to learn how to balance their love for the natural world with their need to survive in it. People have always travelled far from their original habitats seeking betterment in all aspects of life is known as the diaspora. Diaspora cultures have to learn how to live alongside nature without oppressing it. When it is traced in the history, Jews living in Israel have the tendency to balance their need for food, water, and shelter with their desire to preserve the environment. The diaspora shapes the way of people relativeness toward nature. The original homeland's natural environment fostered strongly in human-nature relationships between people and the land. People in the original habitat interacted and cared for the land naturally, the nature of nurturing led them to care and protect the animals within the land

as well as the plants and trees that comprised the land. However, different diasporas experience nature differently due to cultural differences. Since humans leave their original habitats in search of a new home, they often end up in places very different from their original region. In this way, the diaspora is similar to a dispersal zone- the cultural challenges that must be overcome so that new arrivals can find a new sense of belonging within a new landscape. The cultural environment surrounding a diaspora tends to be less pastoral than that of the original homeland. Since ancestral diasporas move from agricultural regions onto rural or wilderness territory, people in these regions tend to see themselves as hunters and gatherers rather than farmers of nature rather than worshippers of nature.

Diasporic cultures have seemingly reduced human interaction with nature compared to that of the original homeland. This is especially true when people leave their ancestral homes in search of a new one. Many Jews relive their childhood homes during Yom Kippur prayers while Muslims perform hajj rituals at Mecca. However, while these may seem like superficial interactions with nature, they are important cultural bonds that help define a person's sense of identity and belonging within a given cultural tradition. The way people relate to nature varies depending on where they were born and raised- as well as on their own personal beliefs and motivations. Judaism emphasizes human-nature relationships while Islam emphasizes divine-human relationships. Both emphasize natural relationships between people and God above all else, but they differ in which relationships receive primary focus and importance versus which ones receive secondary attention via prayer or pilgrimage.

2. Literature Review

This study is considered on the search of screening and analysis few publications of literary work of art with the relevance with writer and the character. According to Dr. Stephen Kellert says that Biophilia proponents the combination of nature and life of people. He reiterates the importance of nature in the life of people and how it helps to improve fitness, memory and attention. An overview of biophilia is nature-based functionality to stress reduction, and literature-based biophilic development. Biophilia is key to read the association of nature and human beings through Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and Psycho-Evolutionary Theory. The correlation between places emphasis on nature, specifically trees, water, and other natural resources to inspire the biophilic design framed naturally.

3. Research Gap

Nature and human beings have a very complex interaction. The goal of the paper is to describe how people and environment interact from a variety of angles and backgrounds. Of course, the fact that people are a part of nature does not address the fundamental elements of the connection. The paper picturizes and adopt the post-humanistic stance, by viewing humans as an integral

component of nature and its forms. Nature should be taken into account in all decisions, and humans have no inherent right to damage it or elevate themselves above it in ethical judgments.

In this relativism of Nature and human beings, Celeste Ng, the young writer of contemporary uncertainty, ethical in building the story-line to give the audience the taste of tragic-flaws of her characters in diasporic and environmental addressal. She is an American writer, educator, and environmental justice activist. Her body of work includes essays on diaspora, gender, identity, and the environment. In her essays, she deals on diaspora and the environment to create and encourage environmental awareness and activism among her fellow ethnic minorities. She aims to shed light on the adverse effects of living in nature-deprived communities. Many diaspora groups face additional challenges because they lack easy access to nature. When people who emigrate from rural areas to cities often find themselves living far from any natural resources. This can lead to a dearth of greenery, which can contribute to health problems as well as an increase in anger, anxiety, and stress. Emotional problems are exacerbated when individuals are isolated from nature and cannot find solace in its beauty or comfort in its familiarity.

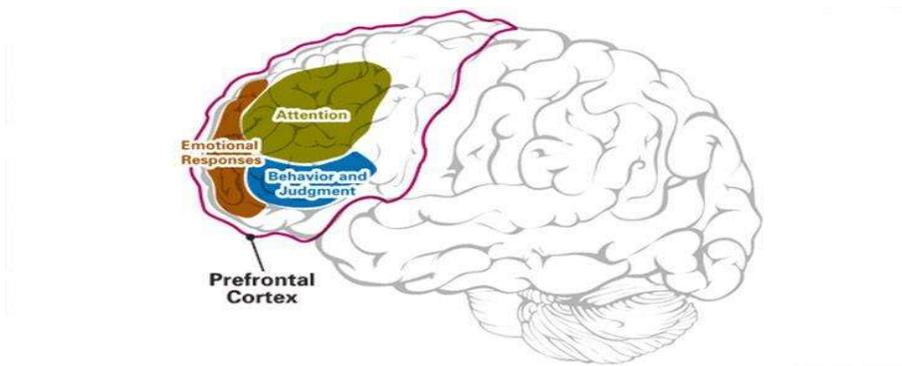


Fig 1: The prefrontal cortex controls executive functions such as attention, regulation of behavior and our emotional responses. This distinction of thoughts on isolation and alienation affects the psyche of the character and results in biophilia.

4. Discussion

Everything I Never Told You is a multi-dimensional novel because to Celeste Ng's use of spatial description. Celeste Ng creates a constricted micro-physical space where through the spatial images affects the characters' feelings and leads to fear and doom. She creates a representation of diversified nationalities as her character to re-emphasize the sense of distinct diasporic discomforts which are captured through Marilyn's disappointment and James' sense of isolation. The subtle inner feelings of Marilyn, James, and Lydia are revealed through the spiritual realm. The loneliness and the struggles of Lydia, Marilyn's second child, enjoys the privileges in the family among the other kids for her obedience. Her inner life, however, her life is a lonely and it is untouched grey area throughout the novel. Finally, she decides to end her life. She is a half-breed and, as the result

of a mixed marriage, finds herself in an uncomfortable position between whites and Asians. On the one hand, she struggled to define herself and is unsure of her racial identity, because she was diverse, she was shunned by other white students at school, no one wanted to be her friend, and she preferred to keep to herself.

The story goes on with Lydia's mother placed her unfulfilled desire on Lydia and wanted Lydia to realize it. She mother projected Lydia with her unmet longing in order for Lydia to understand it. Lydia pledged she would be well-obedient till her mother returned because the loss of her mother had caused her a great deal of trauma. Because Lydia was frightened of losing her parents and feeling alone, she complied with all of her mother's instructions and tried to be a good daughter. Thirdly, James, Lydia's father is deeply estranged from her but deeply concerned about her social condition. James educates Lydia to integrate also expect Lydia to be able to fit in with American culture and have a white-like social network into American society and have her own social circle similar to white people. He hoped that his daughter may overcome the stereotypes associated with being Asian by giving Lydia a book on how to make friends and influence others as a birthday present. Lydia feigned to phone her classmates every day for a long time for the sake of not disappointing his father. She only pretended to talk to people and had no real pals, which made her feel lonely. Lydia eventually became isolated out of fear of losing Nath. Nath is "the one who understood the strange and brittle balance in their family. Who knew all that had happened. Who had always kept her afloat" (273).

Lydia's sense of isolation is identified through her facial expressions in the novel. Her face is a dare. "The directness of her stare, straight out of the page with not even a hint of profile, says What are you looking at?" (12). She shows it up deliberately in her face but she is unaddressed for her behavior and called it as the flaw of nature.

However, Nath's acceptance letter from Harvard University meant that he would be leaving her. Lydia experienced a sense of being completely abandoned. Lydia ultimately decided to take her own life because she was unable to let go of her intense stress or her loneliness. "Everything Lydia no longer can. Who she had been seeing. Why she had lied to them. Why she went down to the lake." (46). Lydia actually made an effort to fight back. She is not interested in following her mother's agenda. Lydia started to see how challenging it would be for her to carry on her parents' ambition as adolescence and academic courses became more challenging. She also made an effort to show some resistance. She befriended the bad kid Jack, who showed her how to smoke, skip classes, and go on dates. Once lit, she placed the cigarette to her lips. "The smoke burned in her lungs and made her head spin and suddenly she felt sharp and aware. Like cutting your finger, she thought the pain, and the blood, reminded you that you were alive" (189).

By battling with her destiny, Lydia hoped to release the pressure she was feeling inside. She didn't actually approach her parents. She made numerous protests, but they didn't seem to be heard by her parents. Lydia therefore battled death and made the decision to pass away in the end.

Lydia is represented as a child who is fulfilling her parent's whims and fancies in every step of her life and achieve laurels without interest in anything that she does. She finds her parents joy as the triumph and focus on her dreams. But she struggles deep within her for not finding a solace in the

stormy path that laid before her. She is given a picture of sad, lonely character submerged her instincts of by faking herself in front of her parents by studying and living the life which is invested on her. She relates herself to the serene composed environment more likely to the Lake in the neighborhood of Ohio. The silent bliss and calmness gained is unshattered to her understandings. She always associates herself to someone and as time fleets people disperse from her life and she longs for someone. When she finds the only comfort, she gains from Nath and he also leave her and Ohio for his higher education, she started to depend on the unshakable things and there to find tranquility.

Everything in Lydia's life to the world and to her parents were smooth but she refrained herself as barren inside without giving a hint for others to find her solace. Lydia is the epitome of diasporic consciousness character, her inclination towards the nature is visible by her acts in the novel. Ng takes the opportunity to correlate that life and death can be associated with only nature. Hence, Lydia finds her peace among the chaos by attempting to commit suicide and succeeded in it. Water is the elixir of life for all living things but in Lydia's life it is different but gave her desired peace of her life. As stated in the novel, "Years ago, the lake had been Middlewood's reservoir, before the water tower was built."(18).

Nature has a deep-rooted meaning in psychology of Lydia that encompasses the core components of existence, including the genes. She experiences that nature-nurtures her issues of by creating space for her emotions to be displayed. Lydia is identified with Biophilia Hypothesis where her attrition towards connecting nature is rapidly increasing in the absence of her loved ones whom she feels connected. In the course of time her psychology explores all the variables that shape and influence the relationship that our internal (personal individualities) and external worlds (physical environment that she lives in) share.

The word "biophilia" comes from the Greek words "bios," which means "life" or "living organisms," and "philia," which means "friendship" or "love." Wilson defines biophilia as the intrinsic propensity to emphasis of life and lifelike processes. According to the biophilia idea, which is founded on biological evolutionary principles, humans have an inherent propensity to react favorably and lovingly to nature. The place attachment is understated in child-nature research, especially is related to the biophilia hypothesis. Burgess made an effort to show how exposing kids to wilderness experiences helps them develop attachments, empathy, compassion, and an aesthetic appreciation of nature.

In the context of *Biophilia, the relationship established by the people with nature, breaks the barriers of the traditional outlook*. Lydia understood the importance of life and its notion drew on various concepts, including the practical dependence of humans on nature, the satisfaction derived from direct interaction with nature, such as through exploration and development of relationship with non-living and the physical appeal of nature is evident yet gives a source of inspiration and peace. She gained peace in few attempts by exploring the lake, though the first attempt to the lake was a disaster to her and she drowned in the lake and later rescued by James. Lydia's character has gentle shift from person to place where her association starts from inspiring people to liking places.

The comparison of character of Marilyn and Lydia can be done to understand the emptiness that a character suffer in the young age. Marilyn's quest for the perfection was fraught with disappointment and sacrifice. Pregnancy forced Marilyn to give up her dream before earning her college degree. She dropped out of college, settled down, and started taking care of her family and kids. James would gently urge her to forego leaving for work when she wanted to. James believed that he should not allow his wife to lead a difficult life like his mother and instead should strive to provide for their families. Marilyn thus again abandoned her dream in favor of her spouse. This could be interpreted as a woman resigning because she must make sacrifices for her family. Here, Lydia who finds the same way to escape for the dual identity. The extremist attitude towards nature by depending on it made Lydia to the looser of her life. She exclaimed the necessity of human beings in her life and which she finds herself as trapped between two junctions searching for right things to happen in her life. Her friendship with Jack startled as Jack has been identified as notorious for his behavior and where Lydia is left alone for her identity at school.

Celeste Ng plunges into the diasporic lifestyle as she is the by-product of first-generation immigrant parents, she carries the torch of underlying the intensities of diasporic features in her writing by giving chance for the characters to deploying the unusual in casual instances. The story themed on nature and its connection to the emotions of the characters. Lydia, used her childhood memories of nature to cope with her grief. She also used nature to heal her fractured sense of self and the other characters were highlighted to get healing emotional wounds through interactions with nature. Characters used nature to nurture themselves and understand their place in the world.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, Ng has successfully incorporated nature and its components into her novel at several points. She skillfully incorporated them into her story by using water as one of the key elements of the landscape. In literary works, the spatial form is used, and different spatial conditions show that it is necessary. She extends a separate space from nature while also embracing a range of social venues, merging mega and micro spaces. In her writing, Ng carefully explains the significance of changes between the macro and micro levels of interpretation of nature. The growth and changes to the numerous locales have made the characters in the novel remarkably realistic. And to some extent, the readers might also detect their trepidation and anxiety. In this multi-space framework, where the novel addresses nature to the extent of life and rescues the human person, there are additional layers of artistic expression. The protagonist, who has a biophilia hypothesis disorder, ends up killing herself to alleviate her suffering from everything the outside world has to offer. Ng gives space for researchers to focus on the setting of the novel and the connect established between nature and human beings. The functionalities of characters of the novel are not restricted in Celeste Ng's works hence gives a chance to analyze them from the perspective of attachment towards nature. She gives an open access to run the predicaments and to bring novel perspective to it. The cultural and indigenous baggage that migrants bring with them can sometimes serve as a compass in the unfamiliar environment and, at other times, might place them in difficult or contradicting situations. Finally, Ng transplants her characters into a new universe after removing

them from their home countries, weaving tales that center on the challenges and struggles they encounter in their life.

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