

Tribhuvan University

Racio-cultural Hegemony and the Experience of British Immigrants in Phillips'

*A Distant Shore*

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By

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**Letter of Approval**

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## **Abstract**

This research depicts how the outsiders in *A Distant Shore* are treated in the foreign land and how the impact of colonial past is flourishing in the mentality of British people. Solomon, a black guy from an unknown war ravaged African land happens to come Britain with his great anticipation of better life there. But quite contrarily, there he gets numerous hurdles to face and finally dies on the foreign land. In nutshell, my research veers around the issue of the contemporary British hostility towards outsiders and how they became the victim of ramifications in England as none of the characters succeed in their goal.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction of the research

From its opening words, “England has changed”, Caryl Phillips’ *A Distant Shore* explores vast themes—cultural dislocation, the anxiety of belonging, migration and social changes—through the prism of individual lives. *A Distant Shore* focuses on the experience of slavery and its legacy of color discrimination and racial injustice dramatizing the discrimination of people of color and immigrants in the past and present times. It shows how today race and cultural relations has a long history.

Set in a village in the north of England, the novel describes a faltering encounter between two solitary and seemingly very different individuals: Dorothy, a repressed retired schoolteacher in her fifties, and Solomon, the mysterious African caretaker in his thirties who drives her on hospital visits. But as we gradually learn their stories, it seems both feel alienated and are seeking a kind of asylum, Dorothy from a broken marriage and guilt at abandoning a needy sister; Solomon, an ex-soldier, from civil war and the slaughter of his family. Their trauma and mental disintegration are skillfully narrated through a fractured narrative, memory lapses and partial recollection. The ordeal of Solomon’s clandestine journey to England is masterly and atmospheric. His cold welcome in an immigration detention cell and his violent scapegoating in England ironically echo the tribalism he fled in Africa. Restrained but deeply compassionate, lucid and modest in its prose, the novel links one of Europe’s major political and moral challenges and the presence of vilified asylum seekers. It renders Phillips’ larger vision of a society transformed by migration but confused and torn apart as to its

identity.

Likewise, *A Distant Shore* is Caryl Phillips' seventh novel; it pursues and develops interests from his earlier novels with regard to both content and form but the novel is also a distinctly new book in that it is less concerned with investigating historical contexts than its predecessors. Phillips has gained his reputation with novels exploring the effects of colonialism, slavery and racism on the mental condition of the African diaspora. In *Higher Ground* (1989), *Cambridge* (1991), *Crossing the River* (1993), shortlisted for the 1993 Booker Prize, and *The Nature of Blood* (1997), he presents the diasporic situation as a result of the 'triangular trade' and elucidates its alienating effects through juxtaposing seemingly disparate historical contexts. In contrast to its four fictional predecessors, his most recent novel is set in the north of Britain in an unspecified present, probably in the late 1990s. It focuses on two rather unlikely companions, a black male immigrant from Africa and an elderly white woman, who are both refugees, in the widest sense of the word.

*A Distant Shore* mainly pays attention to how the British immigrant experience is depicted in them and how the cultural hegemony affects them. As a result, it only focuses on the key characters who lead their lives in Britain during the twentieth century. The finding of the research is accomplished by using the methodology of post colonialism especially the British immigrant issues. This research sticks to the issues of how the cultural hegemony of one culture enslaves another culture, where the insights of the cultural hegemony discussed by the postcolonial thinkers such as Spivak and others. Before starting with the discussion of how Solomon and some

other characters presented in *A Distant Shore* suffer from racism, the research first looks into the causes of British hostility towards immigrants.

The main aim of the thesis is to establish recurring themes of Afro-Caribbean experience in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. In his fiction set in present-day England, *A Distant Shore*, Phillips examines a friendship between an Englishwoman Dorothy and a black African man Gabriel who escaped from an ongoing war in his country (the country is not specified in the book) to England. The way Phillips described their relationship makes clear how the power of imagery and fear of the unknown influence trust and self-investment: "their friendship is tentative, full of anxiety, riddled with doubt, self-doubt, and conducted under the full and judgmental scrutiny of people who are quick to condemn" (Phillips, 30). Thus stereotype prepares the ground for mistrust and suspicion, fuelling alienation and differentiation.

Stereotypes are sometimes deeply engrained which make it hard to move beyond them and such a state of affairs can provoke a certain resignation of those who find it hard or impossible to fight against them. If that is the case, succumbing to stereotypes is an easy way out:

And some people . . . figure out that they will be rewarded if they embrace not fitting in, if they play to the stereotype. Some people can say "That's what they want, they're going to pay me, I don't care;" other people say "No . . . I'm gonna fight it with my pen" as an academic, or as a writer, or as a politician or a social worker. (Phillips 167).



Such an attitude is not necessarily a poor choice; however, it can have ramifications for the rest of the people associated with the same group.

The post-colonial period brought national and cultural awakening as reflected in the works discussed. The national consciousness and embracing of one's cultural roots are important aspects that have helped the post-colonial reconciliation. Accepting and embracing one's cultural roots or racial belonging (and pride) help the development of transnationalism and feeling of belonging in the British society instead of dwelling on its margins.

An exclusive post-colonial reading of Phillips' work opens the text in terms of the aftermaths of the slave trade and colonization. However valid and enlightening, such an interpretation might tend to dim the "universal" in Phillips' work which is for him clearly rooted in the individuals, regardless of their race, gender or class. Perhaps this supranational and timeless dimension can be illustrated through a brief examination of *A Distant Shore*, whose characters are typically Philippians and prove, once again, that Phillips "[doesn't] feel loyalty to any race – but to the human race" (87). Apart from a harrowing section taking place in an unnamed African country, the novel is set in contemporary England, in a small northern village; twenty years after Mrs Thatcher closed its pits (4). It is obviously about the disruption caused by the arrival of refugees in a society that views itself as immutable and where, to the outsider, "people [are] all strangers to one another" (163). However, the starting point of Phillips' artistic enterprise is not an abstract idea but, as ever, human voices. Immigration, which is one of the many current issues raised in this novel together with crime, education and poverty, is not viewed as a general concept, but as a phenomenon which is interesting only through its concrete impact on individual lives.

Once again in Phillips' fiction, two marginal characters occupy centre stage. On the one hand, there is Dorothy Jones, a newly retired Englishwoman in her late fifties, who has just settled in the village and whose "story contains the single word, abandonment" (203). She finds it as difficult to come with her ageing body as to get used to a changing society. On the other hand, there is Solomon Bartholomew, her neighbor, an African, "a man burdened with hidden history" (300), who fled from his war-ridden motherland to seek asylum in England. Without any family ties, both Dorothy and Solomon live isolated lives, but go to great lengths to escape their solitude and their painful, complex pasts.

While Dorothy, desperate for company, starts harassing men then withdraws into her own mental universe, Solomon negates his own self by changing names and adopting the good manners which, he believes, will secure him access to full citizenship and which actually earn him Dorothy's sympathy. As the broken and disrupted narrative suggests, the two do not get the chance to make their budding friendship blossom, but live side by side, wary of invading the other's life. If both are finally defeated by a world obsessed with appearances, Dorothy mentally and Solomon physically, they nonetheless survive in the readers mind as human beings who, in the words of Billy Bragg, have been "washed up on a distant shore", but have made dignified yet vain efforts. Most novels by Phillips end on such an ambiguous, yet not totally bleak note. Their open-endedness does not provide any facile answers to the many problems that plagued men for ages and still do in the twenty-first century. But his characters remain with us, all connected to Phillips's art into a tapestry of the human condition, "a choral accompaniment of voices. [. . .] its

disparate pieces [...] secured by grief. They would never again become unstitched” (266).

Caryl Phillips's (1958) ancestors came from Africa yet he was born in the Caribbean. He was brought up in Great Britain and currently lives in New York City. His works of fiction and nonfiction more than often focus on the ever-changing notions of home, identity and belonging. As he describes his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa in his collection of essays on belonging, *A New World Order*, it is clear that the dynamic and hybrid qualities of identity are interwoven in his discourse since the beginning, "I am thirty-two. I recognise the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong. I am of, and not of, this place" (1).

Caryl Phillips, born in St. Kitts in 1958, grew up in Leeds and now lives in New York. Phillips is the author of eight novels, most recently of *Dancing in the Dark* (2005), a novel about the African-American entertainer Bert Williams, for which the author received the PEN/Beyond Margins Award in 2006. This was preceded by *A Distant Shore* (2003), Phillips's only novel so far with a contemporary setting, which was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book in 2004. His debut novel was *The Final Passage* (1985; Malcolm X Prize for Literature), followed by *A State of Independence* (1986), *Higher Ground* (1989), *Cambridge* (1992; Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award), *Crossing the River* (1993; James Tait Black Memorial Prize, 1994), and *The Nature of Blood* (1997). Phillips has also published three collections of non-fiction, *The European Tribe* (1987; Martin Luther King Memorial Prize), *The Atlantic Sound* (2000), and *A New World Order* (2001), as well as anthologies, stage plays, screenplays, and radio plays. Much of Caryl Phillips's writing, both fictional and non-fictional, has focused on how narratives of slavery

affect contemporary migrant experience. In his writing, an obvious medium for individual and collective self-exploration, the issues of displacement and, of identity and memory are prominent. While probing cultural conflicts arising from the diasporic condition, Phillips also examines its cross-cultural potential. In fact, much of his work is informed by the tensions of numerous opposites – among them home and exile or strangeness and familiarity – which imbue it with a certain ambiguity.

Himself of mixed ancestry (African, European, Indian, and Jewish), his writing making ample use of postmodern narrative techniques, resorting to an impressive range of intertextuality, and often designated postcolonial or Caribbean, Black British, British and, more recently, also African-American, Phillips is an author who cannot be labelled ( Sarvan and Marhama 1991, 40) – nor does he want to be. Michael Dash's description of 'the' Caribbean writer as "a natural deconstructionist who praises latency, formlessness and plurality" (26) certainly seems to apply to Phillips. And while he may not be too happy with the implied essentialism, Phillips's own praise of latency, formlessness and plurality makes him and his writing the opposite of what 'fundamentalists' aspire to. The current ubiquity of the term fundamentalism (in the aftermath of 11 September 2001), an inflation of sorts, has contributed to devoiding it of meaning, and the facile identification of fundamentalists and fundamentalism is another labelling whose general validity Phillips contests in the following interview. Yet, as Karen Armstrong points out, there seems to be a "family resemblance" (2000, 11) of fundamentalisms in that they are commonly characterized by a pronounced anti-modernism and an interlacing of the religious and the political. In fundamentalist belief systems, political action is usually being legitimized by, and dictated through, a transcendent authority which manifests itself in some written forms. They aim at a

speedy and comprehensive reconstruction and homogenization of society – to the detriment, very often, of socially marginalized groups. Considering the function of literature as a medium for cultural self-reflexion, it will be no surprise that fundamentalisms 'made it' into literature.

In addition, particularly in the Anglophone fiction of the last two decades, the topic of fundamentalism has been variously addressed by a number of writers, among them, to name but a few, Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, Jeanette Winterson, Tova Reich, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, and John Updike – yet not, at least not explicitly, by Caryl Phillips. But Phillips's contribution to contemporary English writings is also thematic and lies in extending and subverting the usually confined canvas of English fiction, which he does by addressing haunting themes that call the existing order into question and, as we will see, by focusing on characters who are usually left out of traditional historiography. Not only do his novels relentlessly alert their readers to the hidden history of the West, that of the transatlantic slave-trade, for example, but they also underline Britain's inherent, though long negated, heterogeneity. Whereas slavery and the "other" presence in England were either inexistent or, at best, figured as side issues in most English novels until the 1990s, they have become central issues in Phillips's writing. So, in the middle of the Thatcher era, his first novel, *The Final Passage*, draws attention to the predicament of the pioneer generation of Caribbean immigrants whose arrival in Britain after the Second World War was to change British society for ever. Similarly, *Cambridge* and *Crossing the River* underscore the fact that the slave-trade and slavery belong as much to British history as that of the New World,

while *The Nature of Blood* highlights the exclusive treatment that Europe, England included, has at all times reserved to the outsiders, whether black or Jewish, settling on her territory. In *A Distant Shore*, Phillips acts once again as a precursor by focusing on Britain as a society in flux, addressing the burning question of asylum seekers, and wondering how the arrival of these newcomers affects the local population but also the refugees themselves. Finally, *Dancing in the Dark*, though set in the United States, deals with identity issues that have become burning ones in contemporary Britain too.

*A Distant Shore* has received several criticisms since the time of its publication. Different critics have analyzed it from different perspectives. Bénédicte Ledent notes that all of Phillips novels are set in the past whereas his plays and scripts for radio and television often focus directly on what it means to be black in Britain today. He claims, “What immediately catches the eye when one compares *A Distant Shore* with previous novels by Phillips is that this book is set in today’s world, though of course one could say that his former fictions allegorically address the present “(13). For him, this book slightly deviates from Phillips previous novels as it is set in the present-day Britain, though it must be noted that his drama was always situated in today’s society.

Similarly, Rand Richards Cooper analyses the novel from the perspective of cross culturalism. In this way s he puts: In this section, I will start by discussing how the theme of slavery and its legacy is developed in his novel *A Distant Shore* (2003). This will be followed by a comparison between *A Distant Shore* and four other novels by Phillips to demonstrate that all of his fictions have quite a few characteristics in common, both thematically and formally. These four novels are *Higher Ground*

(1989), *Crossing the River* (1993), *The Nature of Blood* (1997) and Phillips most recent work: *Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007). What these four books have in common is the fact that they are marked by cross-culturalism(41).

For Cooper, Caryl Phillips is a much respected contemporary author of English fiction and non-fiction. Today, at the age of 50, he has already written four plays, one screenplay, nine novels, and several works of non-fiction, including the essay collections *The European Tribe* and *The Atlantic Sound*. His works almost always focus on the experience of slavery and its legacy: by describing the discrimination of people of colour in past and present times, he shows how today a race relation has a long history.

Likewise, Kowaleski studies the novel from the perspective of the technical aspects. Kowaleski puts argument in the following way:

Remember, the frequent shifting between a subjective first-person narrator and a cold third-person narrator in *A Distant Shore*, the multitude of voices that we find in the prologue and epilogue . . . as a result, Phillips works is unique as Phillips always finds different ways of showing what slavery and its legacy do and have done.

Nevertheless, a lot of similarities can be found between Phillips' fictions. What immediately catches the eye is that almost none of the storylines are told in a chronological way. (56)

For Kowaleski, Phillips novels only show the reader what many people have been through, they also make the reader feel and experience the thoughts and sentiments of these victims". As a result, reading Phillips works can be a very unsettling experience,

but it proves to be effective, as his novels have a way of growing on us, staying with us long after we have closed the book.

Thus, from the above mentioned criticism it is proved that different critics have analyzed the novel from the multiple perspectives but the issue of post colonialism is yet untouched, which proves the innovation of the research.

The research is primarily based on the authentic cites through the consultation of the internet. The guidance of the lecturers, professors and the teachers is taken as the valuable assets. The text regarding the issues of the post colonialism is also consulted. The thinkers to initiate the issues of the immigrants and blacks, such as Spivak, Said, Rushdie and others also used to prove the hypothesis.

The fact that Phillips sets this novel in the present-day Britain does not mean that every connection to his previous novels has disappeared. On the contrary, the same themes and style can be found throughout his entire work. Bénédicte Ledent and Helen Thomas, who are Phillips most prominent critics, have both written a book about some of Phillips works and they have already shown how many of Phillips novels have some features in common. However, their monographs do not include a discussion of *A Distant Shore* which means that the many links that can be drawn between this novel and Phillips other works have not been discussed profoundly by any critic yet.

Anglo-Caribbean writer Phillips continues to build his elegantly crafted collection of work about lives in, but not of, England, this time bringing a mentally ailing, forcibly retired music teacher into tentative association with an African political refugee. Dorothy Jones is a divorced, once-beautiful woman in her 50s whose increasingly erratic behavior gave cause for her dismissal as a schoolteacher. The



elder daughter of a truculent working-class father and unprotective mother, Dorothy failed early on to lend vital assistance to her abused sister when she needed it, and was unable to enliven her marriage with the higher-class but ineffective banker who left her for a younger woman. A couple of ruinous affairs capping this dismal history have pushed her into near-madness. Now, her parents and sister dead, she lives alone in a new subdivision outside her childhood village where her only friendly neighbor is Solomon, the neighborhood watchman and handyman. A fugitive from bloody African political upheaval, Solomon has been even more brutally battered than Dorothy, but he is made of stronger stuff. Phillips backtracks to show Solomon's nightmarish stint as a rebel soldier and equally hellish escape to England and his painful steps to a new identity assisted by an Irish truck-driver and his landlords the only kindly people in the forlorn surroundings. The success with this pairing of lives is mixed. Dorothy Jones comes perilously close in some ways to Blanche Dubois without the guts, but her surroundings are perfectly rendered, and Solomon is drawn with Phillips's accustomed precision and depth, and, with the calm, cool understanding of the reality of racial foolishness, it's enough to tip the balance.

*A Distant Shore* is Caryl Phillips' beautifully mature and emotionally resonant new novel about life in contemporary England. The story's protagonists, Dorothy and Solomon, can't come from more different backgrounds. She's white, he's black. She's a lonely retired schoolteacher with deep family secrets, including a broken marriage, to haunt her. He's the sole survivor of a family wiped out by ethnic cleansing in an unnamed African country and an illegal immigrant desperate to begin a new life in civilized and democratic England. They are both "outsiders" in their own social context and outsiders recognize if not seek each other out in their subconscious

yearning for human contact. Their dim lives brighten up albeit briefly when they intersect before fate rudely steps in to dispatch them to their own black holes. Significantly, even their shared loneliness could not bridge the gap in their ethnic and social differences when they tried to connect but sadly failed. Unbeknown to them, they would never get a second chance.

The final outcome comes as a shock when it is revealed less than a quarter of our way through. We then backtrack into the past when Solomon was Gabriel and we follow his escape route out of hell into the land of milk and honey. Dorothy, who disappears for much of the middle section, returns in the final third to reveal her own private hell from being repeatedly used and humiliated by men, including a male colleague and an immigrant grocer, who aren't interested in anything but a casual sexual relationship. Her fragile mental state takes a turn for the worse after she arrives a little too late to nurse her estranged and dying lesbian sister and goes into terminal decline when her friendship with Solomon is cruelly ended. All this shifting around suggests a strategy for keeping us from getting comfortable. Phillips uses fragmented narrative polemically. Any one way of knowing someone, his novel reminds us, is apt to be a drastic simplification; identities are crisscross assemblages of experiences, often traumatic, that defy a single, settled view -- especially because survival often requires leaving them behind. As he rides into Europe in the back of a stifling truck crammed with refugees, "Gabriel knows that if he is going to live again then he will have to learn to banish all thoughts of his past existence." How are we to see Solomon/Gabriel/Major Hawk? As the victim forced to watch his family murdered in a brutal civil war, later wielding terrible violence himself in order to escape? The pot-smoking rebel commander? The shabby illegal held in a British jail, accused of rape?

Or the soft-spoken black gentleman in his driving gloves? With so much hidden history, can we really see the whole person, including the exigent selves that emerge in response to dire pressures, only to recede when deliverance arrives? Borders crossed create a new language, new habits, a new person -- whether the borders of a country or, in Dorothy's case, of a failed marriage, a sibling's death, a festering family secret. "*A Distant Shore*" takes a quick approach not to events but to identity itself. The synthesis of different worlds eludes character and reader alike.

## Chapter II

### An analysis of the text *A Distant Shore*

Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and the definition of the term “postcolonial” in a very general sense, it is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. The European empire is said to have held control over more than half part of the globe by the time of the First World War, having strengthened its control over several centuries. The sheer extent and duration of the European empire and its disintegration after the Second World War have led to widespread interest in postcolonial literature and criticism in our times.

The theoretical innovations of, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gyatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford and others have in recent years vitalized postcolonial and Diaspora studies, challenging ways in which we understand culture and developing new way of thinking beyond the confines of the nation state. The notion of diaspora in particular has been productive in its attention to the real-life movement of the people throughout the world, whether these migrations have been through choice or compulsion. But perhaps of even greater significance to postcolonial theory has been the consideration of the epistemological implications of the term- diaspora as theory. Such studies see migrancy in terms of adoption and construction, adaptation to changes, dislocations and transformation, and the construction of new forms of knowledge and ways of seeing the world.

Before beginning this introduction to post-colonial theory, it is important to place the term into some historical and intellectual contexts. As the term implies one of the central features of post-colonial theory is an examination of the impact and

continuing legacy of the European conquest, colonization and domination of non-European lands, people and cultures. In short, the creation by European powers such as England and France of dominated foreign empires. Central to this critical examination is an analysis of the inherent ideas of European superiority over non-European peoples and cultures that such imperial colonization implies.

In addition to critically analyzing the assumptions that the colonizers have of the colonized, it is imperative to uncover the damaging effects of such ideas on both the self-identity of the colonized and the instability of the conceptual underpinnings of the colonizers. A key feature of critical theoretical examinations is the analysis of the role played by representation in installing and perpetuating such notions of European superiority. To put it simply, how representation perpetuates negative stereotypes of non-European people and cultures and how do such stereotypes negatively affect the identity of those stereotyped is significant. This can be perceived in the text when Solomon is brutally killed by some stupid boys.

During the past century, for a variety of reasons, more people have been crossing national and cultural borders than ever before. This, along with constantly developing communication technology, has seen to it that clear-cut distinctions, divisions and borders are no longer as easily definable as they once were. This process, now commonly referred to as 'globalization,' has led to a rising trend of 'multiculturalism' and 'cultural hybridity,' terms often connected with celebratory views of our postmodern, postcolonial world as a colorful melting pot of cultures. However, what these celebratory views conveniently avoid recognizing, is that the increasing occurrence of hybridity places a growing number of people in a painful space inbetween identities where they are "neither just this nor just that" (Dayal 47),

“neither the One... nor the Other... but something else besides” (Bhabha Commitment 41). Perhaps in an effort to combat this ignorance, a new breed of authors – who have experienced the rigors of migration first-hand – are giving voice to this pain-infused space on the periphery of cultures and identities through a developing genre of transcultural literature. This literature typically deals with issues of identity closely related to globalization and multiculturalism. In my thesis I will be looking at Caryl Phillips’ *A Distant Shore*. The author moves away from an idealistic, celebratory view of hybridity as the effortless blending of cultures to a somewhat disenchanting approach to hybridity as a complex negotiation of split subjectivity in an ever-fracturing world. This novel lends itself to a psychoanalytic reading, with subjects who imagine themselves to be unitary, but end up having to face their repressed fractured subjectivity in a moment of crisis. The psychoanalytic model of the split between the conscious and the unconscious, then, resonates well with the postcolonial model of the intrinsically fractured hybrid identity. However, while psychoanalysis focuses on internal processes, postcolonialism focuses on external processes. Therefore, I will be making use of a blend of psychoanalytic and postcolonial concepts to analyze and access discursive meanings in the texts. More specifically, I will use Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘hybridity’, and Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of ‘the stranger’ as distinctive, yet interconnected conceptual lenses through which to view all three of these transcultural novels.

The dissertation, *A Distant Shore* by Caryl Phillips is enveloped with postcolonial issues, but I, being a researcher of this book, emphasize also on the racial and cultural hegemony of Britain and the experience of immigrants. Here the main

characters experience quite pitiful situation in their life. As an immigrant and being an inferior race they have been facing different kinds of psychological and physical pang. First of all, the main character of the novel Solomon's life from his birthplace passes several hurdles and arrives in England. There too, he is struck by many differences between African and British culture. As he first meets Denise, he is irritated, offended almost by the way she dresses and how she interrogates as if she is of his equal "....her school uniform with neither pride nor dignity. The skirt is too short and rides up one leg so that half of the girl's thigh is exposed" (161). Initially she behaves in very familial way "Scared u, did I? I brought some food and some drinks" (160). But later accuses him of rape. This also demonstrates the nature of English citizens. English people never consider him as a human they almost all time keep on humiliating him. While taking court, Gabriel faced derogatory attitude by the English people:

the driver and policeman next to him talk and occasionally they throw a comment back in the direction of Gabriel, who sits behind the metal grille . . . then the driver grabs Gabriel by the collar of his shirt . . . as they drag him out he bangs his head on the roof of the van. He notices others now, including a half-dozen police officers, and some men with cameras who begin to take pictures . . . he feels a policeman push down his head so that now he is looking at his shoes. (163)

Another passages, though shows that Solomon is equally disturbed by the fact that British people seem determined to make no contact whatsoever with people that they do not know; they tend towards very antisocial behavior:

English people look unhappy, and he notices that they walk with their heads down as though determined to avoid one another. It is strange, but nobody is looking at anybody else, and it would appear that not only are these people all strangers to one another, but they seem determined to make sure that this situation will remain unchanged.

(163)

The term post colonialism has subsequently been widely used to signify “the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies” (Ashcroft, 186). The post colonial issue prevalent in the novel further proves the text that it deals with post colonialism. Solomon was born in an undefined African country as Gabriel. As place has always been of great importance in post colonial theory Phillips sets a part of his novel in Africa so as to prove his novel a post colonial one. Africa is a country torn a part by a civil war. After its independence from colonial rule, neither it can remain in that situation guided by someone nor can adopt a new system. So it further falls in the grip of civil war, tribal war etc. They were busy in the formation of the group to be powerful.

We were the smaller tribe. We worked hard and we did not harm anybody...It was only after one of our people was elected to the presidency that the real trouble began; the killings. The army rebelled and the government troops spilled out from their barracks and cruised the streets in vehicles with machineguns pointing out of the windows (137).

The novel presents such atrocious conditions of African land that army started to hang out on the street and kill whoever found. “They began to drink and kill and kill and drink...this morning I saw with my open eyes as they took a woman, wrapped



her in a blanket, poured kerosene on her and watched her burn alive” (137). Several groups make their own plan of controlling over the land by killing them. “This is a war and you must kill. You must kill and then eat the heart of your victims to make yourself more powerful (148).

The novel also depicts the massacre of Gabriel family which is also the result of postcolonial chaos in African land. Gabriel’s family lives in an unknown African country where civil war has been taking place. Gabriel witnessed the brutal assassination of his family members to whom the soldiers killed by lining them up. Now the government troops killed all the members of Gabriel family; his father, mother and two sisters. “ ‘Smokin’ Joe puts his gun to the back of Gabriel’s father’s head...’Smokin’ Joe’ casually pulls the trigger and the skull explodes” (84). “‘Finish them off’ says ‘Brutus’; pointing to the sisters, ‘O.J.’ shoots Gabriel’s mother in the chest” (85). After having been witnessed the harrowing situation at his home he attempts to leave them all in their own situation. He simply steps out from the cupboard and moves out of home because he realizes that they will kill him if he stays there for long time. So Gabriel in order to get rid of this brutal situation makes an effort to leave Africa and plans to move England. “I did nothing wrong, but I know I have to leave this country and undertakes a very dangerous trip to England. “I did nothing wrong, but I know I have to leave this country and undertakes a very dangerous trip to England. “If I will stay here they kill me” (88). Eventually he reaches his uncle’s house with his trembling body. He was feeling very uneasy to walk because his legs are trembling. After reaching his uncle, Joshua, house he tells everything to his uncle. “Gabriel, did they kill everybody? Gabriel shakes his head” (87). Now he desires to leave for England, but for that he needs two thousand dollars.

There were many people with Gabriel who want to flee from their country and most of them wish to go to England. Everybody has paid the money for their trip. Gabriel asks some money from his former employer, Felix. But Felix gives him only little money though he owns a lot. This is not sufficient for Gabriel to move, so he will have to do anything for additional money. Now he hits on Felix head and takes out money “he picks up the rusting metal clock . . . and brings down its full weight onto the head of Felix . . . he sees the thick pile of dollars bills . . . he grabs the bills and two gold rings that are inside, and he pushes them into his pocket. Gabriel has done such crimeful act not because he wants to do so but simply because of his compulsion, he needs money anyhow for his trip. In this trip too all migrants have faced many challenges and obstacles. “Tired, hungry and dis-oriented, the weary migrants stumble ashore” (103). As we know that before leaving he was a soldier conscripted into a rebellion in his country his journey as a wanderer starts when he sets off with the assistance of his uncle to avoid his tragedy of home. Their journey begins for England, first of all they reach Europe and France and then only England. They are illegal and should go illegally through various off-ways, so they face difficulties either in plane or in train. This shows how immigrants leave their country and shifted to another for the only reason of keeping them alive. They have to stay in one compartment for three days without any kind of stuff to eat. Gabriel is first transported under a heavy tarpaulin in blazing heat; then by a plane without seats, which “looks like a tubular warehouse” (99) wherein he and his companions “squat awkwardly” (99); they then ride a bus, cross a river and undertake a long journey in a “cramped train” (103) which stops in northern France. There is variety of people in the train from different region, so they do not share same language which causes another problem for the immigrants.

Another thing which shows one of remarkable events in course of their journey is: “Gabriel chases after his younger friend and the two scamper quickly in an effort not to loss sight of the Chinese man . . . dashes to the side of the ship and swings himself off the quayside, and now Gabriel runs out, his heart pounding, and he too grabs a rope and disappears over the quayside” (135). Gabriel’s entrance into England by clinging to the sides of the ship, rather than being accommodated inside it foretells the unwelcoming reception and persistent exclusions he will face society he will try to integrate into on arrival.

In the novel, Gabriel undertakes a long and painful journey from Africa to England. Gabriel initially wants to make a life in his home country. Before his father tells him of partaking in civil war that tears his country into multiple, he had not thought of leaving. “Never before had I left the capital” (140). Unfortunately for him, having entered into the war as a rebel fighter, he is betrayed by his friends when he refuses to kill innocent villagers. In return of this, Gabriel got the witness of brutal killings of his family. His los of home- “This is not my home anymore”- indicates his departure from Africa. The journey of his flight from the unnamed country to England is dangerous one and he almost lost his life. He travels with and becomes infatuated by a fellow refugee, Amma, who has a baby. However Amma sneaks out in dawn, and leaves him while they are still in France. Gabriel makes a channel crossing to England clinging to the side of the ship together with the help of Bright and Chinese man. Soon he disembarks; Gabriel is arrested in the charge of raping a white teenage girl. He is locked up in a cell with a Middle Eastern Immigrant, Said, who is accused of robbing a white couple. Later, he is released, he makes a trip of Weston, in northern England, there with the generosity of an Irish immigrant, Mike, who gives him free lift and

introduce him to the Andersons who take him as their son and family and to whom he is known as Solomon Bortholomew. Although, Solomon is not their biological son they help him in finding job and home in Stoneleigh, the new development on the hill. After reaching England Solomon faces many ups and down. In course of reaching England Gabriel has pain in his leg so that he can not walk properly. This causes much trouble to him. Especially the problem of language hits him much. "This first English night causing him much pain, and he knows that to try to speak well prove too much for him," (150). In Britain for white is the big problem. They want to outcast the black "being English was more important than being British and being British meant to no colored" (42). Though British people hate color desiring for homogeneity in the society, Dorothy does not discriminate the people of color as she spits words about Solomon: "Why the hatred towards Solomon, who doesn't talk to anybody, who washes his car. Who hasn't done anything, what do these people hope to achieve?" (43). Solomon being a black guy in white community does not feel comfortable, and wants to stay in his home. He feels hard to make friend of white because they hate blacks. So Solomon never comes out of this bungalow except for his duty "he hardly left his bungalow apart from taking me to the hospital and patrolling Stoneleigh with his torch" (47).

The issues of Diaspora which is one of the most harrowing historical facts in human history, with special regard to colonialism, and a crucial item to post-colonial theory the novel also proves the innovative part of my research. In all literary post-colonial representations, diaspora, displacement, home, identity, hybridity, transculturation, just to mention a few, are so linked up that it is practically impossible to analyze one without the other. It has also been a fact that the diaspora issue may be

probably a common dominator in nearly all novels written in English by British writers and by writers hailing from Britain's ex-colonies. Migrants' population in Britain is no novelty and a culturally diverse landscape in Britain is a fact. What is perhaps new in these post-colonial novels depicting shifting of borders, crossings and cultural fusion is the experience felt by othered populations of being in an identity maelstrom due to the effect and residue of slavery and of frustration when confronted in the still biased world. Phillips *A Distant Shore* fits within diasporic writing that has become part of the mainstream British novels. However the greatest cause for contemporary diaspora has been political conflict and strife in underdeveloped countries which have stimulated immense and complex flow of displaced person labor migrants and skilled professionals.

Diaspora theory is at present one of the most important items in postcolonial discourse since it deals not only with the pretransnational events but comprises current movements and events culminating in transculturation, identity and hybridity.

"...Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homelands into new region ..." (Ashcroft. 68). The writer himself, in a way, a Diasporic one who had migrated to London though he was born in St Kitts. Being a diasporic writer his novel directly or indirectly carries the theme of lonesomeness, memory of their homeland and that of exile. Phillips in the novel portrays Diaspora phenomenon in the refugee and job-seeking modality to prove which Phillips creates the characters from outside England. Phillips presents the characters such as Solomon, Said, and Mahmood who arrive Britain in search of refuge and solace.

The characters in the novel indulge in the memory of their homeland that resulted into lonesomeness. Paradoxically a different type of Diaspora and

homelessness is also felt by white British people in their own homeland. The process of deeper frustration in Dorothy Jones seem to reveal how the native people also suffers from loneliness, fragmentation etc of an individual in a transitional world. Solomon migrated to England to save himself from that war-ravaged condition of his country. Being an outsider, he remembers his homeland and family because in the new land he becomes alone and to get rid of that loneliness he takes the help of the memory. Similarly, other minor characters; Mike, Mahmood and Said are also equally suffered from the memory of their homeland. Mike is from Ireland and Said from India bears some kind of memory of their own.

Transnational diaspora is a post-colonial issue since it is the result of late capitalism's reshuffling of population, mixing of communities and deeply affecting changing in culture produced by the colonizers outside Europe. Part II of *A Distant Shore* is a stream of consciousness text, in which Solomon already in a cell in England focuses on himself and events occurring on recent past in an unnamed African war-torn country in which he was born. A civil war was on: ethnically Gabriel is a member of non-ruling tribe or rebel and hunted by government soldiers. The text gives the reader a bleak picture of civil war with its murder, cruelty, destroyed communities and shattered lives. After Gabriel being eyewitness of the rape of his sisters and the murder of his family, events succeed quickly and logically: Gabriel finds his uncle Joshua, a broker of the transference of the refugees out of country urgently requires a life or death to find two thousand dollars to flee the country. He gives money to Joshua to pay for his passage "beyond this nightmare and to a new place and a new beginning" (84).

The huge effort that diasporic people expend to find a place from where to start life meets with counter identity forces that actually baffle their expectations and sometimes defeat them. On Gabriel's arrival in England he is confronted with sexually-biased charge, imprisonment, a case of sheer lack of care by a policeman with regard to the fate of another non-European unjustly held prisoner, a feeling of insignificance and loneliness, threat letters, almost insurmountable difficulties in getting the right document for permanence in the country and in getting a job, and finally torture and death. Although Gabriel and his community reflect common historical experiences and cultural codes, the same history and ancestry, points of difference arise in England, which due to diaspora, reveal what Solomon has become. Solomon's identity has been formed by the diaspora in both a negative and positive process. The negative process disrupts the imagined community produced by the imminence of the diaspora. His annoyed mentality occurs in the words of his Iraqi cellmate: "The light in England is weak. It depresses me. They have taken the sun out of the sky" (71). During his trajectory from the south to the north of England, he perceives that he is nobody, the English are either impatient "Stuart Lewis does not look up at him. The man continues to shuffle through a pile of papers in front of him . . . Stuart Lewis stands and begins to push the papers into the briefcase" (162). Surely English people are biased as Dorothy testifies when ruminating on her father's and the teacher's stance against the colors. However, the construction of the diasporic identity contests and subverts the imagined world and constructs the positive identity. Gabriel sheds his murderous identity and turns into the genteel Solomon. Where as the razor-blades and hate letters he receives and the dog-mess placed in the letter box do not make him feel significantly angry, the quite job as a watchman and as a voluntary

driver demonstrates the result of a process that built up his diasporic identity: an honest, respectful and caring citizen, or rather, a contrast to other people's hostile attitudes.

Actually, the new diasporic identity of the African Solomon challenges and subverts the native civilizes Englishman and his actions. Solomon's care for his cell-mate in London subverts the selfish and no caring attitude of the policeman; Solomon's respect for the wild English girl Denise subverts the bias of the policeman who charged him with sexual assault; his gratitude towards Mr. and Mrs. Anderson disrupts all of charges imposed upon him. The colonial experience which colonized people, including Solomon, had to undergo and by which it was normalized to see itself as other has been disrupted by a different diasporic identity. Although past continues to speak to Solomon and may be constructed through memories, as it actually does in his reveries, a break has occurred.

If Solomon's cultural identity in England is continuity with the past, it is also a rupture from the past. After a short time Solomon obtains the necessary legal papers and becomes the British citizen. Does he belong to England? Is England his home? Even as a future alienated Englishman he must, sooner or later, come to terms with his ethnic presence. However this presence is changed. The African country he has left is not the same and can not be recovered as a pre-war or pre-colonization representation. There is no return. He is trapped in the European presence which boils down to exclusion, imposition and expropriation. In *A Distant Shore*, this dominant presence, represented by policeman, barman, hooligans, villagers, elderly people, though strong and deep, seems to have been surmounted by Solomon's diasporic identity who has acquired a new sense to deal with the past and the present. The imaginary community



the “home”, however, can not be fulfilled. His tentative reach for recognition as a self, for equality, for relief from loneliness has been defeated in precisely the country of freedom and democracy.

The matter of race and culture that hegemonizes the characters also pervades in the novel. Cultural hegemony as the systemic negation of one culture by another pervades in the novel as British culture keeps its control over those outsiders. Because of cultural and racial hegemony of Britain Solomon gets trouble in many places. Blighted by racism and parochialism, Phillips's contemporary England isn't a pretty sight. You may not die from ethnic cleansing in England but all the same, it's a society fraying at the edges from the pressures of new social forces at work. Yet the deep, deep sadness at the heart of the novel is tempered by the realization that in life, there's always kindness and goodness to be found in the most casual or unlikely of places and persons.

Now my research posits the issues of immigration in Britain with the experience that our characters confront in the novel. According to Paul Gilroy in his work ‘Postcolonial Melancholia’, British society wants to put an end to multicultural society; it wants to abolish “any ambition toward plurality” and consolidate “the growing sense that it is now illegitimate to believe that multi-culture can and should be orchestrated by government in the public interest” (2). As a result of this will of Britain “diversity becomes a dangerous feature of society. It brings only weakness, chaos, and confusion” (2). Thus, it is not a new thing that immigrants are not welcome in Britain as they are a prominent threat to the society’s homogeneity. One potential cause behind the anticipation of such homogeneous society in Britain is the fact after World War II, Britain didn’t get chance to mourn the large changes that came with the

end of British empire and the “loss of imperial prestige” (90) that came with immigration. As a consequence, the action of banishing black, sending them to the places where they belong, soured highly. The people of British nation want that immigrants should head back to their home so that Britain, once more, would be a great nation characterized by homogeneity.

The Britishers want to suppress their history which is marked by atrocity, for that they blame to the immigrants that:

comes to represent all the discomfoting ambiguities of the empire’s painful and shameful...history. The immigrants are now here because Britain, Europe, were once out there...And yet its grudging recognition provides a stimulus forms of hostility rooted in the associated realization that today’s unwanted settlers carry all the ambivalence of empire with them. (10)

The outsiders are therefore not welcome in Britain, “unwanted and feared precisely because they are the unwitting bearers of the imperial and colonial past” (101). A further interesting explanation that Gilroy posits for racism in Britain is that “the Other” has become “partially familiar” (125). Above all, British society do not want immigrants to blend in or try to integrate into their society because they have the concept that multicultural society ruins the country so they regard immigrants especially presence of black is labeled as a threat to them. In the novel Phillips presents several incidences where Britishers seems indifference toward the characters. Solomon, Said, Mahmood etc are the victims of such British hostility. Solomon, ranging from the charge of misbehaving Denise to the feeling of lonesomeness, bears several heart rending events.

In connection to this, much of the central section of the novel deals with how England disappoints Solomon and his fellow refugees, once they get to the end of their journey. We can't help but admire Phillips' desire to explore this disappointment, which is surely one of the great unexamined tragedies of our time. But again, there is something generic rather than particular in the moments as they pass, whether Solomon is cooped up in a police cell or being robbed by a stranger on the streets of London. Very occasionally - as when he dreams, one night in the cells, of his family and the man he killed - we catch the resonance of tragedy in the recesses of his soul. In contrary, at other times he appears to be a character who has been created to carry the weight of Phillips' political anger, and who is too weighed down by that to stand up for himself. Clearly, this emotional blankness may be deliberate. In Solomon, Phillips may be at pains to construct a character that has shut down much of his emotional repertoire after experiencing so many blows. In the scene where Solomon watches his family being massacred, for instance, this blankness achieves certain plangency: "While the others continue to laugh and taunt his father, Smokin Joe casually pulls the trigger and the skull explodes. Small pieces of brain fly in all directions, and Gabriel's mother and two sisters begin to scream" (84). The brutality is familiar to him. He looks on without emotion for he knows what is to come. But elsewhere it is hard to tell where deliberate blankness shades into the blankness of a less than fully realized life.

In *A Distant Shore* the notion of England to be one of the dreams of many outsiders revealed to be false simply because of the painful experience of the blacks and that of outsiders. Through the help of the character, Gabriel, Phillips shows the indifference nature of black immigrant with the English society. Gabriel's encounter

with an English girl shows the first-hand experience of Solomon in Britain. Landing on the shore with hurt leg, Gabriel is dragged by his friend, Bright to an abandoned house in search of refuge. While resting there they are provided with food and first aid by a white teenage girl. Here we don't have any clue about what happens until we are noticed that Gabriel is arrested for the rape of the girl. Phillips addresses the problematic issue of rape by not naming it. In Africa Gabriel witnesses the rape of his two sisters. In England his traumatic past resurfaces as Gabriel is accused of raping Denise. The actual rape in Africa and the feign rape in England is the Phillips way of addressing the issue of racism that proves the fact that black men are naturally oversexed. In one of the interview Phillips states that "people are frightened of black male sexuality and people are fascinated with black female sexuality" (9). In the novel why Phillips portrays the rape of black girls, Gabriel's sisters, dismissed so easily and in case of white girl, though she is not raped, Gabriel is arrested in charge of raping her? The simple answer would be that he attempts to show how the racism affects the people.

We first meet him in part II, although we do not recognize him at first as his name at this stage is Gabriel. He is in prison having been arrested as an illegal immigrant and also under the threat of being charged as a sexual offender. Gabriel's cell-mate, another refugee, is dying and Gabriel fears that his own flight to Britain might have been futile:

After being in this cell for an hour, Gabriel is resigning himself to the fact that in all likelihood he will be sent back to Africa. All the money and the sacrifices of the journey may have come to this. To be locked

up in a prison cell with a sick man who, like himself is a refugee in England. A man whose life also seems to have run aground. (188)

Part II of the novel introduces the reader to fragments from Gabriel's past: living as part of a minority in an unnamed African state, joining the rebel army in a civil war, observing the torture and massacre of his sisters and parents, committing murder himself to acquire the money needed to leave the country after the obliteration of his family, the desperate and difficult journey to Europe, illegally entering Britain hanging on the side of a channel ferry, and, finally being arrested after only a few days in England. Gabriel's flight is motivated by a picture of England as a benevolent and caring nation: "but you must try and reach England. They are friendly and will give you food and shelter. We are not welcome in France [...]." (118). The contrast between Gabriel's hopeful naivety and his experiences in Britain could not be greater.

Gabriel who changes his name to Solomon after his release from prison is conceived as the prototypical refugee turned immigrant, a representative of the countless immigrants and asylum seekers traumatized by a past full of violence and destruction and a present informed by suspicion and rejection. Although I can imagine why Phillips probably decided against describing his African protagonist's country of origin in any detail, I found the lack of information problematic as it seems to make Solomon too much of a representative. In a similar way, his experiences on entering Britain, from being arrested and charged with sexual offence, suffering the warders' ignorance and brutality in prison, being dependent on a prejudiced lawyer, meeting fraudulent countrymen after his release from prison, to meeting the lorry driver who is to become his friend and benefactor seem too much for an individual life thus undermining the credibility of the fragile bond that develops between Dorothy and

Solomon. Whereas in previous novels Phillips set out to individualize his characters, Solomon comes across as something like a verbal monument—a noble gesture, yet it leaves the novel somewhat unbalanced.

It is not a coincidence that Solomon dies in a canal beyond which is a pub named “The Waterman’s Arms”. In his ‘High Anxiety’ of *Belonging*, Phillips says that he wishes his “ashes to be scattered in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean at a point equidistant between Britain, Africa and North America”, and then refers to this watery crossroads as his “Atlantic home” (304), which is symbolized by “water” in the novel. Although Phillips makes Solomon die in the canal at Weston, “a murky strip of stagnant water” (6), this water does, however, lead to the Atlantic Ocean, the geographical boundary across which Solomon made his way to Britain. Phillips sends Solomon, who cannot feel that he belongs in England, back to the water boundary, making him eternally belong in his “Atlantic home”:

The London sky has darkened like a bruise and Gabriel still does not recognize a single building that he walks, past, or a junction that he crosses, or a street that he turns into. For hours he has searched for first Jimmy, then Emmanuel, and finally Bright, but he now understands that these directionless streets were not laid out to welcome the feet of newcomers. (176)

The division of two communities is mainly communicated to the reader from Dorothy’s perspective. Even though Dorothy is gradually revealed as an unreliable narrator and many of her descriptions are colored by her perception- or even willful construction- as a stranger in her own homeland, there is the nevertheless from the

beginning strong evidence that her neighbor can not tolerate difference. On one particular occasion Dorothy imagines that a man from the village:

considers me and everybody else in the new development to be interlopers. All of us, disturbing a pattern that has gone on for decade until Stoneleigh came along to make them feel as though their shrinking lives, which were already blighted by closures and unemployment, were even less important than they had hitherto imagined. (29)

It seems that this quote says possibly more about Dorothy than about the man. However she conjures up this projection only after several encounter with some of the villagers, which reinforce such a construction. One case in point is that of the- presumably Jewish- Dr. Epstein who according to the barman in the pub would have been much happier had Stoneleigh already been finished: “Up there they might have fit in better, but living down here with us, well, it was difficult for them to mix” (9). Thus in the context of reading the neighborhood as a miniature representation of the nation, the people in the new development are similarly viewed as unwanted intruders and outsiders on the level of the village as the asylum seekers and immigrants are on the level of the nation and thus again the village mainly mirrors at large.

As a result of the so far discussion, the ‘other’ characters in the novel are hence constructed as strangers on ground of race as in the case of Solomon, gender and religion as in the case of Dr. Epstein, and even of class as is implied in the case of Dorothy and Dr. Epstein. As in many of his other narratives, Caryl Phillips has thus again skillfully interwoven the strange quadruplet of race, gender, religion and class into his narrative to lay bare these continued oppressions practiced in Britain- or for

that matter- in European society. It seems noteworthy that already two years prior to the publication of *A Distant Shore*, Phillips expressed in a nutshell the concern he was later to fictionalize in the novel. Yet there is more to be said on Dorothy's lucid comment on Weston's economic degeneration and on the effect of this has on the self-esteem of its inhabitants.

In the novel, Mr. Anderson, "my benefactor" as Solomon comes to refer him, is at some pains to explain to Solomon what goes on people's minds:

There's an awful lot of you, and the system's already creaking or breaking point. I mean, things are particularly bad if you want to get into one of our hospitals. People are upset . . . people think that other . . . that you have too many children. They think that you don't really want to work. It's in their heads and it makes them mad. (289)

To this helpless attempt at explaining prejudice Solomon responds with a disarmingly wise innocence: "Who put it there?" (289). Even though Mr. Anderson and his wife prove to be guardian angels for Solomon, in this particular exchange, Mr. Anderson can not seem to help himself but use distancing device of the plural 'you' when referring to Solomon and the implied masses of asylum seekers. In this enumeration of the usual prejudices, the one referring to the lack of hospital space and the fear of being outnumbered are especially noteworthy as they both imply the threat of extinction, personal as well as national. Yet again, this passage evokes the concept of the imagined community, which needs to protect itself, its numbers and its space, against the intrusion of others in order to secure its mere survival. The stranger is thus constructed as, a figure of danger, who transgresses perceived boundaries and



engenders fear in the native. As a result, the enforcement of the violence becomes justified.

The strange encounter that receives most of the attention in the novel is undoubtedly the relationship between Solomon and Dorothy. It is however not only with Dorothy that Solomon shares a common bond. When considering the cast of characters he encounters in Britain, in fact, almost every person who does him a good turn is strictly speaking a stranger and as such as a member of community of strangers. It is thus not surprising that Solomon strikes up a friendship with Mike his “Good Samaritan” (293), who is an Irishman is himself a stranger in England. Even Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Anderson are not fully English for they retire to Scotland, the place where Mum is originally from. As Solomon’s “sole desire was to be safe in England” (279), it is these other strangers, who provide him feeling of safety. In his first encounter with Mum Solomon significantly realizes that “there was something about this small elderly woman that made me feel safe” (277). Phillips seems to have deliberately constructed a group of characters that are not English but different in their own ways in order to show how a similarly marginalized position in society help the strangers and how the so-called English society neglects the plight of those strangers. However, Gabriel’s moving from London to north of England hardly solves the problem of racial injustice. Phillips wants to show that it does not matter who Gabriel, who Solomon and what he has done, race itself is a non-belonging. Gabriel himself does not know the reason why he receives such insulting treatment in a place he has dreamt of a safe. As in London Solomon still gets lost in Stoneleigh not only because of his marginalization as the only black in the village, but also because he can not share his story. When finally he meets Dorothy, Solomon feels like opening up, but

will not have the opportunity to share his inner crisis. The fact that how Gabriel intends to integrate into English society is crucial because he is divided between a past he does not want to re-visit and a present that is hostile. Gabriel's trauma is different from Dorothy, although both are equally devastating. In the end, Solomon is still Gabriel as he is still imprisoned in his traumatic past or hostile present. Even more unfortunate fact for him is that the only real friend of Stoneleigh shares the same condition in her own homeland.

The characters in the novel experience a bit sour situation only because they are black. Solomon, the protagonist of the novel instantly after arriving England, meets a young British girl, Denise, who later accuses him of having raped her. After that Gabriel is taken into custody and charged with the case of rape where he again experiences some awful things: the regular insults of the guard and the death of his sick cell-mate whom nobody wants to help. Eventually when he gets out of the jail, he is not offered a warm welcome. To avoid that kind of adverse situation, now he moves to the north of England where Gabriel changes his name into Solomon so as to live a new life regardless of what previous had happened.

There too he does not become able to live a serene life; he suffers from loneliness, on the one hand he lost his friend Mike and becomes the victim of racial insults while on the other hand he still has the hangover of assassination of his family members. Surprisingly enough, he happens to meet a company, Dorothy, as his neighbor and establishes a good relationship with her. In the end Solomon as a black never accepted in the community of Stoneleigh and is brutally murdered by some "stupid bullies" (Phillips 53) who "just wanted to have some fun" (54). This event demonstrates one of the Britain's derogatory attitudes towards the immigrants and the

blacks. When Solomon is locked up for the abuse of Denise he is ignored and treated like an animal by the guard. When Solomon asks for doctor for the dying cell-mate, Said, the guard refuses his pleadings. Instead, the guard scolds that they should be silent while he is watching Television. The warder uses some abusive words to him as a respond of his request for doctor. “Fucking noisy cannibals . . . you stupid little cretin” (81). Finally a doctor arrives but it is too late to save the life of Said; he has died and Solomon is kept alone in the cell with dead body of his mate. This awful condition of Solomon is beyond the comprehension of British society so they made him to make his existence in that worst situation. Similarly, when Solomon wants to consult the lawyer, the warder deliberately prohibits him from meeting the lawyer. The diversity in culture and language also affects the characters of the novel. Contrary to the culture of their mother country England offers the different culture and language to them. Once when Solomon was watching Television, he heard women using ugly language in the streets “women using foul and abusive language in the streets”(284).And the newspaper having a photo of women wearing only underwear makes him feel uncomfortable-“pictures of women only with underwear”(284). What I mean is Solomon gets confusion and surprise not because these issues are amazing but simply because they are different from that of his culture.

Similarly, not only the culture that affects the characters but also the Language that create big problem for the immigrants. Because of variation in language Solomon becomes alone, he hasn't found anybody to talk as a result he becomes the victim of lonesomeness too.

My only real regret was the lack of anybody from my own country with whom I might talk. My language was drying up in my mouth, and sometimes, when nobody

was around, I would place my language on my tongue and speak some words so that I could be sure that I was still in possession of it. (285-289)

As is apparent from above passage, his loneliness is strengthened by the fact that he can not speak his own language anymore. The losing of his language denotes lose of his identity. Here, Solomon is in the verge of identity crisis. From England he gets changed in his personality, so if he were to return to his own home country, he again would fail to fit in that society.

He thus belongs to the culture of hybridity as he neither can be totally British nor can be back to his home, which leads him to the state of inbetweenness. As a consequence, Solomon belongs to neither nation, and this again accelerates his feeling of lonesomeness within him. As a remedy to this loneliness of Solomon in the last part Dorothy emerges in his life as a company that they were looking for. His country, like his mother who bore him, does not exist for him any more. Thus in England Solomon attempts to soothe his trauma by “trained himself to forget” (297). Later as his nightmare subsides, and he begins his new life in new home, he declares: “I am one-year-old . . . I am a man burdened with hidden history” (300). Solomon does not succeed in forgetting his original locale, both geographical and familial. While being attacked by the youths who eventually stone him to death in Stoneleigh he unfolds the maps of his origin: “They do not who I am. I am the son of elder, a man who decided disputes and punished crimes. I am the man who traveled a very considerable distance . . . I am a man who has survived, and I would rather die a free man than suffer my blood to be drawn like a slave’s” (282”. The lonesomeness of Solomon is followed by a similar type of problem of isolation faced by the other female protagonist, Dorothy.

In *A Distant Shore*, the problem of physical boundary-crossing is not only faced by migrants. After retiring from a local grammar school because of an extra-marital affair with a colleague, Dorothy, a music teacher, moves to Stoneleigh, “a new development” in a village named Weston, which is “five miles outside her home town” (268). According to Dorothy’s monologue in the first chapter of the book, Stoneleigh is afflicted with a sense of alienation and isolation, because it disrupts the sense of continuity of Weston, a town which “is hardly going to give up its name and identity” (3). The old villagers of Weston are not “comfortable with the term, ‘new development’” (3), and the postman considers those who only put “Stoneleigh” on the envelope to be “persistent offenders” (4). Also, Stoneleigh is located “on the edge of Weston” (3), up on a hill. Therefore, the villagers are antagonistic toward the newly-developed Stoneleigh and its residents who should belong to Weston, and this has the result that “our village is divided into two” (4).

To avoid being lonely, she frequently leaves Stoneleigh, going to the local pub in Weston. Even so, she has never had a successful conversation with anyone in the pub, including the landlord, who she frequently talks to. Instead of sincerely feeling sympathy for her friend, Solomon’s death, the landlord defends the village by denying the fact that Solomon, a newcomer and stranger to the village just like Dorothy, was killed by the villagers. His response, the so-called “sense of community” (49) reveals his blind desire to protect those with whom he is more familiar, who are “old” for him, and also implies his unconscious hostility toward those who are new, like Solomon. This includes Dorothy, notwithstanding her identity as a native Englishwoman. Thus, Dorothy is hurt by his words. Therefore, villagers like the landlord who are entrenched in what is “old” make it difficult for those who are “new” to acquire a

sense of belonging, even if those new residents cross the physical boundary to communicate with them. Consequently, it is not surprising that Dorothy is always in a state of isolation, even when she is in the village where she can find people to talk to. To a certain extent, this is caused by Dorothy's own deficient ability to communicate'; nevertheless, the villagers' vicious assumption of the newcomer also plays an important part. Carla's mother unconditionally believes in her daughter's statement that Dorothy "should get some help" for "behaving strangely" (23).

Both Dorothy and Solomon obtain the feeling of consolation and warmth from crossing family boundaries of different types. Dorothy has crossed the boundary within a broken family, and establishes a close relationship with her sister, Sheila, after being separated for six years, while Solomon crosses the boundary and enters a strange family, the Andersons, who later become his surrogate parents. Among the several relationships in the novel which have crossed the gender boundary, the two ambiguous friendships between Dorothy and Solomon, and Solomon and Denise, are particularly worth discussing as being representative.

Both of these relationships which brought the characters a certain sense of belonging, are founded on their shared loneliness and painful experience. Dorothy notices Solomon's consistent state of solitude, which is exactly the same as hers, and wants to give him some company, as well as finding some herself, while Solomon shows his tenderness and understanding when he finds that Dorothy has also lost her parents, just like him. Denise, a teenage English girl who provides Solomon with food when he first arrives in England and hides in an empty house, also suffers from her father and boyfriend's neglect, and even violence. Therefore, the knowledge of human beings' mutual vulnerability and shared emotion makes it easier for people to accept

and understand those who have a different gender and come from different nations. In this way, it is possible to find a sense of belonging.

Apart from the similarity, the sexual and racial factors make the relationship between Dorothy and Solomon more complicated and limited than that between Solomon and Denise. Since Dorothy considers Solomon to be a “handsome man”, and this fact makes her feel “uncomfortable” (16) shows her attraction towards Solomon. Also, she believes that “Solomon was a man who could have made me happy” (65). However, such a sexual attraction constitutes a factor which deepens the sense of tragedy in their relationship. She leaves Stoneleigh for a two-day trip, in the hope that her temporary absence can attract Solomon to her, but while she is away, Solomon is killed. Also, although she feels and expresses her anger toward the racist villagers after reading their abusive letters to Solomon, Dorothy who holds a discriminative attitude toward migrants and colored people herself, later admits that “I don’t want Solomon to become a problem of my life” (45). Therefore, although the relationship between Dorothy and Solomon has crossed the boundaries of gender and race, it has not gone far beyond the barrier built by them. Comparatively, the friendship between Denise and Solomon is more ideal and encouraging. There is no sign of sexuality or racial discrimination at all in their relationship; pure compassion and understanding can be seen to emerge from their shared pain and vulnerability.

Oddly, the sections of the book that deal with Dorothy's life spark with more energy. Her life travels downwards from disappointment to disappointment in a small-scale echo of Solomon's. But it is in the depiction of her encroaching madness that Phillips creates by far the most subtle moments of the book. He describes a scene first from Dorothy's point of view, making it sound perfectly acceptable - and then

describes the shocked reaction of others, so that you are pushed into seeing how strangely she is behaving. So, for instance, he describes her attempt to spark some romantic interest in a fellow-teacher at her school in a way that gains your sympathy, and then jolts you into a wildly different view of the situation when she is accused of harassment. After her retirement from the music teacher she becomes lonely; she has lost all that were close to her: her husband Brian, her sister Sheila, her parents and finally the only friend Solomon. In order to overcome that loneliness, she moves to Stoneleigh, but there fails to get recovery from her very problem. Her doctor advises to start giving piano lesson for the sake of making her busy, but that too fail when her only one student quits. Now the only thing that she can hope for is she might get the presence of Solomon at the site through the window:

In the morning I wake up in the same place with the pages of Sheila's letter scattered about me like confetti. My neck aches from the awkward way in which I've been resting it on the edge of chair and I immediately recognize that I'm in same pain. But there is also another feeling although I've no words to describe it. I glance out of the window, half-hoping to find Solomon washing his car, but there is nobody in sight. Then I understand the strange feeling that has come over me, loneliness. Carla won't be coming today. I share at the piano and realize that music lessons won't help me today. (37)

From the above excerpt, it is apparent that though she is in the full grip of loneliness; she has still hope alive in her to overcome that lonesomeness. Being a victim of strong sense of abandonment, she tries to avoid this feeling by establishing a relation with Mahmood. Though she knows that Mahmood is a married man, she still offers him for



coffee with the intention of sleeping with him. Though she got the company of Mahmood for healing the wound of abandonment she even is not completely satisfy with this relationship:

These days their bodies separate with indifference and Mahmood is quick to give her his Back. Sadly, her lover seems to have bolted down the short slope from attentive to Perfunctory without any intervening stages of incremental boredom. One week he took The time to speak with her before, during and, most importantly, after their relations.

The following week he was racing through the motions as though he was late for an appointment. (198)

The first meeting of Dorothy with her husband Brian was the moment, she had been searching for. When she gets a successful man who had job in “city merchant bank” (206) as her husband, her limit of happiness is beyond her anticipation. Surprisingly enough, this sweet couple “could not have children” (206). Now to the contrary of her anticipation her husband left her. “He left me and ran off with a younger woman” (203). Dorothy is left alone when her husband, has given divorce for another girl, Barbara. He went Spain with Barbara after writing her that she should now forget everything of their relation. After his departure for Spain, she tries many times to contact him but he keeps on avoiding her. Being a divorced woman obviously she faces many hurdles in daily life and she continues her effort to overcome those obstacles. In order to solve her hand to mouth problem, she picks up the profession of music teacher at the Grammar school. But again she is left alone by her the only students.

This event becomes one of the prominent causes behind her lonely life. Further Dorothy starts to think about somebody else who can be her company. For this reason despite Mahmood's ignorance towards her she still shows her desperate need of him. Their affair abruptly ends when Dorothy goes to Mahmood to give a doll for his child. "the blonde-haired doll. For your child" (214). There she meets Mahmood's wife, who does not say only word but spits in the face of Dorothy: "spits at the Englishwoman and catches her in the face with her spittle" (215). Because of her childish behavior of entering into someone's life she became humiliated by Feroza's wife and in a very apologetic tone she calls Mahmood: "Closure with dignity. Nothing more. She telephones him when she imagines that Feroza will have gone to sleep. 'Mahmood', she whispers, 'it's me. I'm sorry for calling, but I think I need to see you.' There is silence. 'I need to explain about this morning, that's all'" (215). But her effort of making their relation dignified one with Mahmood goes in vain when Mahmood does not show any interest upon her.

Being apart from Mahmood, Dorothy can not remain alone for long so, she, again with married man, asks to go for a drink, which results in their spending the night together. Dorothy informs to Geoff Waverly something about her life:

why not? She thinks. It has been a fortnight now since Mahmood put the phone down. Apart from the twice weekly games of tennis with the boring woman who is the head of English, her life has returned to a familiar routine of time spent on the keyboard, assiduous reading, undemanding television programmes and fitful bouts of sleeping.

. . . there was a stimulating confusion in her life which, with the slamming of a phone Has once more become as unsatisfactory as an unopened suitcase on a single bed. (217-218)

When Sheila died of cancer in London she becomes alone in her family. Obviously it would become hard to live for her. “Dorothy, you’re going to have to learn to live without Sheila. I know it’s difficult for you, but if you can’t let go then we’ll have no choice but to get you some help” (58). Not surprisingly though, the death of Solomon in an unknown region becomes worthless. Nobody knows him and nobody cares about his death, I mean his body and his possession. Dorothy states “I worry over who will look after his car or tell his family” (59). Being alone and fed up with English society, behavior of English people and situation of there, Dorothy desires to leave England with her little of prosperous life. “I want to leave England. To see Spain or Italy. England has changed” (60).

Dorothy tried each and everything to get rid of her loneliness. She even tried golf but that too is proved unsuccessful to be her part of life “that served only to reinscribe the loneliness” (226).she always is in search of someone who gives her the feeling that there is more to life than she is experiencing. Her type of nature brings problem in her life making her inferior to other. As she spent a whole night with Geoff Waverly, he becomes sad by her behavior. Actually he wants to end their affair for the sake of his marital life and asks Dorothy to understand this. Yet Dorothy calls his wife and expresses a deep concern about him. As a result, Geoff is furious and expresses his anger: “you have no right to call my wife, and you have no right to enter my life in this way. Have u any idea how much damage you’ve caused? . . . you and I are finished. I want you out of my life” (235).

Dorothy's sense of herself is shaped by a past she would like to forget: her upbringing by a narrow-minded and autocratic working-class father, an unsuccessful marriage ending with a short note on the kitchen table when her husband leaves her to live with somebody else, the break with her sister Sheila who feels betrayed by Dorothy's lack of understanding and solidarity when she comes to her for help, their tentative reconciliation when Sheila is dying of cancer, the enforced early retirement after an aborted affair with a colleague who accuses her of harassment. Dorothy's new home is meant as a new beginning, close enough to her origins to be comfortably familiar, yet up on the hill, on the periphery, to allow for a bit of breathing space. However, Dorothy's expectations do not come true. Her new life is too solitary and uneventful for her liking. Her only comfort is Solomon Bartholomew, who lives next door and who is also an outsider to the community. Solomon, a quiet black African, is the night-watchman of the housing estate. Dorothy senses that he is as lonely as she is:

She looks out of her window and sees the man next door who's washing his car. He keeps it neatly outside his house as though it's a prized possession. Aside from this man, there is nobody else in sight on this bleak afternoon. Just this lonely man who washes his car with a concentration that suggests that a difficult life is informing the circular motion of his right hand. His every movement would appear to be an attempt to erase a past that he no longer wishes to be reminded of. She looks at him and she understands. (268)

We can simply make a claim that for the failure of Dorothy, in terms of the relation with society, she herself is largely responsible. As is apparent from the abovementioned facts, the cause of her lonesomeness is also her deliberate relation

with two married men and even her confrontation with their wives which certainly adds some of discomfort to them. As a result, she is avoid and humiliated. In the very opening pages of *A Distant Shore*, Dorothy is presented as a character who can not distinguish each person: “England has changed. These days it’s difficult to tell who’s from around here and who is not, who belongs and who is a stranger. It’s disturbing. It doesn’t feel right (3).

The other feature of Dorothy that proves her a failure one is she only talks about other and teaches something to other but she herself does not apply herself. For instance, at one moment she tells Solomon how he should cope in with community: “I want to tell him that in England you have to become a part of the neighborhood. Say hello to people. Go to church. Introduce your kids to their new school. You can’t just turn up and starting wash car. People will consider you to be ignorant and spand-offish” (16). If she were aware of the fact she would not have been isolated in the society. But she herself is unaware of the fact. Her words remain only in words but fail to implement those words into action, so she becomes the victim of loneliness. Her continuous break up with all that close to her furthdr intensified her loneliness. The death of her sister is not less painful do her. In order to avoid that miserable condition, she takes the help of sex from two married man also portrays the bleak and degraded picture of Britain in general and of Dorothy in particular.

As he shifts in and out of Dorothy's consciousness in this way, showing how everything she sees is seen at a slightly different angle by those around her, you catch the intense flavor of her loneliness - the loneliness that she thought, for a time, and she could lay down in Solomon's presence. It is this loneliness that seems to be the most brutal aspect of the England that Phillips is trying to convey to us, a loneliness that

was the first thing that Solomon noticed as he saw England from the window of a police van: "It is strange, but nobody is looking at anybody else, and it would appear that not only are these people all strangers to one another, but they seem determined to make sure that this situation will remain unchanged." It is not so much in its changes, as in its resistance to change, Phillips suggests, that England's greatest sadness lies. When Solomon moves to Stoneleigh, he and Dorothy becomes each others friends. Therefore when Solomon is murdered, Dorothy's nerves collapses due to loneliness and intense emotional loss. Dorothy states her mental state as follow:

My heart remains desert, but I tried. I had a feeling that Solomon understood me. This is Sometime before dawn, as light not my home and until they accept this, then I will be as purposefully silent as a bird in flight. Begins to bleed slowly through the night sky, I will ease myself out of this bed and proceed to put on my day face. (312)

With Solomon, Dorothy had found refuge from life-long anxiety of being insecure around people, be they boyfriends, neighbors or even family. But she has come to recognize that "England has changed" (3), a realization which, beyond her feeling of disturbance, suggests that she is at least able to acknowledge the change and eventually adapt it, as she does it through friendship with Solomon.

If we have to unearth the nature of Britain we feel that it is decorated with selfish lifestyle. "I don't think Britain is any different from most western societies in that people don't talk to each other" (interview with Phillips). In the novel some characters are happened to come Britain just because they wanted to become the citizen of Britain and some to make their life more sophisticated. As Phillips says in an interview with AfroEuropa: "wanted to belong to Britain but found it very difficult

to attach themselves to this society, because it's not a society that willingly accommodates outsiders very easily" (13). The characters in the novel wanted to belong to the British society but fails miserably making themselves of neither country. According to Rushdie: "Britain is undergoing a critical phase of its postcolonial period, and this crisis is not simply economic and political. It's a crisis of whole culture of the society's entire sense of itself. And racism is the most clearly visible part of this crisis the tip of the kind of iceberg that sinks ship" (129). The derogatory attitude of England is even apparent from Rushdie's statement that, "this is not the England of fair play, tolerance, and equality". England offers a wide range of discrimination towards blacks and women- "black women are abused and children are beaten up on their way home from school" (134). "the police offers threat instead of protection" (134) this sentence carries the very nature of England which always takes people of outside as beasts.

Although mainly focusing on the lot of Solomon, Phillips also describes the stories of other two migrants, one of whom is Said, Solomon's inmate in prison, and the other is Mahmood, who becomes Dorothy's lover after her divorce. Similar to Solomon's hope of finding sanctuary in Britain the anticipation with which they travel across the country remains unfulfilled as they have become the scapegoat of British hostility. Mahmood also migrates to England because of his unsophisticated imagination based on insufficient knowledge about there country, at the age of sixteen carrying a big dream of making enough money, so that he can go college. He assumes that there will "be no problem finding a well-paid job of some description in Mrs. Thatcher's country" (202). His dream is also to "go to university, hopefully to study law or medicine (202)", which suggests that, by going England, he aspires to be

respected and even gain a higher social status. Nonetheless, he ends up running “a modest newsagent’s in a small town in the north of England that boasts neither a cathedral nor a university” (202). By making his immigrant characters cross the national boundaries, Phillips uses their actual experience in the country as evidence of the falsehood of such anticipation, which ultimately echoes England’s current inability and uncertainty. Although Mahmood is hardly hopeful about his better status, he joins his brother who owns three restaurants in England. He wants to start his own business with his wife, Feroza by saving enough money. However this dream is quickly torn apart:

The sight of fat-bellied Englishmen and their slatterns rolling into The Khyber Pass after the pubs had closed, calling him Ranjit or Baboo or Swamp Boy and using popadoms as Frishbees and demanding lager and vomit in his sinks and threatening him with his own knives and their berry breath and bellowing for mini-cabs and food that they were too drunk to see had already arrived on the table in front of them, was causing Mahmood to turn prematurely grey. (202)

Mahmood quickly realizes that he will never be accepted in this society. When he later becomes a news agent, he still has to endure the constant insults and this makes him almost desperate: “This England is crazy. I go in the streets and after all these years in this country they tell me, “Your mother fucks dogs.” Why does my mother fucks dogs? They do not know my mother.” (259). Mahmood is the typical example of immigrant who has large hope and dream but shattered quickly making him only scapegoat of Britain.



Said like other characters in the novel, also experiences this depressing form of racism. Like Mahmood he too moves England with the dream of better life in Britain:

I know that in England they will give me money and some kind of Voucher and let me work. Everybody wants to keep out the Muslim, but in England freedom is everything. They can change the law, but you can not change the culture of the people and so I am not afraid.

British people are good. (78)

In fact he is in England with great hope of earning money and sending back to his family. He wants to call his family and wife too by sending them money. However, once he arrives in Britain, he is accused of having robbed a British couple and as a result he is locked up in prison. Actually he has not robbed those old couple that is apparent from his explanation to Solomon: "I have done nothing. I am not a criminal man. I have never been a criminal man. I have two hands, I can work" (79). Actually he wants to do here is to work, yet he does not get chance. In this situation he feels very sad because he has come England by selling all land and animals of his country. So he has compulsion to live there though he has to face problems. "I can not go back. I sold my land and animals to pay for my journey I have nothing to go back to." When he is put in the jail he is not treated well by the guard. Because of the unflavored environment of jail Said's health worsens day by day. Despite the effort of Solomon to save him he dies.

Furthermore we can take Paul as a representative of all British citizens who always wants to make fun of immigrants. Actually British citizens feel superior over outsiders and always want to dominate them physically or psychologically. In the novel Paul murders Solomon by humiliating him. Paul and his friends tied him, at the

back of van and drove away only to make fun of him. “they jumped him and tied him up . . . drove him down to the canal, then out towards the quarry” (54). The murder of a human dismissed so easily when the murderer makes, the witness, his girlfriend, not to tell the truth to anyone by threatening of killing her. Carla explains this situation in this way: “Paul will kill me if he knows I’m here” (52). Though Solomon is murdered in the sight of Carla she could do nothing because she is threatened or is the product of same culture. She guided hegemonically by the English culture.

The twenty first century witnessed great migratory movement from the so-called third world in general and Africa in particular, to Europe. The circumstances behind this movement go beyond the failure of postcolonial national independences. The experience of contemporary black presence in Britain still exemplifies the predicament of the condition of exile and of the nature of asylum. This reality contrasts with the possibility for asylum seekers to be positive in terms of finding safer place while fleeing in the location of their origin.

Now I’ll focus on how the impact colonialism has affected the characters in the novel. The novel presents Gabriel as a victim of socio-political contingencies in Africa. He is embroiled in a socio-political system that renders him a mere “messenger”. As he acknowledges a, “messenger clerk is not a man: I was a thing to be tolerated, a creature in a T-shirt and torn pants who was not much better than the cockroaches that skittered noisily across the floor” (139). Being heavily shocked by the death of his family members, Gabriel realizes that he has not been “prepared for the life” (138) he is living. In representing Gabriel’s experience before his departure for England, Phillips presents Africa as holding a bleak future. But Gabriel’s

victimization in Africa and the impact it has on his life is not compensated for by the hospitality in the European country he enters.

Another thing which Phillips creates to show the fluctuating identity of the character in the novel is his continuous change of name. The instability of Gabriel's identity through a series of shifting name allows for the readers to find out how the identity of an individual is shaped by the circumstances in which he finds himself. In the novel three names is given to refer to one individual according to the events they address. The man who flees from Africa and eventually dies in Stoneleigh, in northern England is respectively known as "Gabriel", "Hawk", "Gabriel" again, and finally, Solomon. Gabriel is the African man whose father insists him to partake and it is he who arrested instantly after arriving England in case of rape. Hawk is born to the civil war, by it being located in the past of the characters, represents the roots of his future predicaments. Solomon is the full bloom of character's past as Hawk and Gabriel.

The passage that Gabriel undertakes from Africa to England transforms the asylum-seeker entirely. In the novel Phillips reveals how the passage is not in itself traumatic but also representation of shifting identities- historical, cultural, and personal. This experience is neither specific to the asylum seeker nor is the view peculiar to Phillips for as Stuart Hall points out, "identity is a production which is never complete, always in process" (392). The identity of the asylum-seeker in England dramatizes this condition as the subject becomes particularly unstable due to the chaotic experiences he undergoes.

From the above analysis, it can be said that to Caryl Phillips' point of view which he has expressed in *A Distant Shore*, England's blind pursuit for hegemony and current inability to adapt itself to the inevitable change brought by transnational and

multicultural realities makes boundary-crossing a problem faced by both migrants and natives. Through picturing the experience of Solomon and Dorothy, he implies that physical boundary-crossing is far from being able to make outsiders feel belonging, but crossing the social boundaries to establish interpersonal contact and familiarity provides opportunities to understand that those who are different and new may share much similarities and common emotion, thus leads to the engendering of tolerance, compassion and love, and this is where the possibility of belonging lies. However, although there is no impermeable boundary, the reality within the country at present time decides that the boundaries can only be crossed in a limited time and to a limited extent.

Therefore, as Phillips points out in *New World Order*, in present world, “our identities are fluid”, “belonging is a contested state” and “home is a place riddled with vexing question” (6). Nonetheless, the moments that boundaries are crossed still give us reason to not be too pessimistic, because “the progressively utopian possibilities” (McLeod 14) in the country has been suggested. From the above analysis, it can be said that to Caryl Phillips’ point of view which he has expressed in *A Distant Shore*, England’s blind pursuit for hegemony and current inability to adapt itself to the inevitable change brought by transnational and multicultural realities makes boundary-crossing a problem faced by both migrants and natives.

Through picturing the experience of Solomon and Dorothy, he implies that physical boundary-crossing is far from being able to make outsiders feel belonging, but crossing the social boundaries to establish interpersonal contact and familiarity provides opportunities to understand that those who are different and new may share much similarities and common emotion, thus leads to the engendering of tolerance,

compassion and love, and this is where the possibility of belonging lies. However, although there is no impermeable boundary, the reality within the country at present time decides that the boundaries can only be crossed in a limited time and to a limited extent. I think that Phillips conflates the private and the public spheres. It is not possible to legislate away bereavement, relationship breakdown or unhappiness.

However we can campaign against immigration controls and the bogus distinction between asylum seekers who need our help and those who don't. Possibly Phillips is encouraging us to be more compassionate, but the politics of compassion have lead from one humanitarian war to another, and the victim culture often serves the most able advocates rather than those most in need.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Conclusion**

In nutshell, my research veers around the issue of postcolonialism, which does not exceed the arena of British immigrant's experience, in order to unearth the issues of race and the impact of hegemony of western culture into the life of immigrants, in one of the widely know novels of Caryl Phillips' *A Distant Shore*. As mentioned above, in British land strangers are never welcomed just because they have great faith on homogeneity, For the purpose of demonstrating the British hostility towards strangers in the contemporary Britain, my research mainly concentrates on two main

characters; Solomon and Dorothy, which does not mean that I've ignored other minor characters of the novel who become the victim of racio-cultural discriminations.

The notions of home, belongingness, displacement and crisis of identity are some of the issues regarding post colonialism, raised in the research. With its close examination of twentieth century Britain the novel provides a powerful commentary on the nation's contemporary condition by drawing a very bleak picture. Equally do the fates of the novel's two protagonists- death and mental collapse respectively- provide little hope for Phillips' vision of a multicultural society. Hence the only glimpse of hope for the future of the nation, its accommodation of change, and its acceptance of outsiders can be detected in the portrayal of the delicate friendship formed between Dorothy and Solomon, two vulnerable and sadly defeated characters. Phillips's most impressive achievement in this novel beside creating a character like Dorothy and taking up the cause of the unknown migrant or refugee is his handling of time and his illustration of the painful process of remembering. In Dorothy's narrative the confused and confusing time-scale reflects her reluctance to remember as well as her attempts to cover up what she sees as personal failures. In the third and fifth part the slippage in the narrative is also indicative of an increasingly distraught mind, as much a reaction to the murder as a result of her rejection of the changes she sees everywhere around. They meet in a small corner of England, given last chance at redemption and belonging—this time with one another—before prebuidice and brute violence destroy even that. Phillips crafts his novel with great skill, portraying his characters with a faithful eye that reveals their inner beauty as clearly as their defects. A true master of form, he manipulates narrative time and perspective to create a disjointed sense of place that mirrors the tortured, fractured inner lives of his

characters. And my research centered on diversely prevalent negative attitudes of British towards strangers and their misbehave and humiliation which made them to feel lonesome. The author chooses the characters from different location of previously colonized African and other countries, making himself a post colonial writer, which provides me a space to step on for the implementation of the theoretical modality of postcolonialism. Finally, the issues which I have raised above prove my research a new one making it a postcolonial reading as well as deals with the Britain's hostility towards outsiders.

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