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Double Yoke: An Exposition of the Harassment of the Blacks in the wake of World Wars and Colonialism in Caryl Phillips' *A Distant Shore*

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Abstract

Caryl Phillips is a prolific writer whose works depict cultural dynamics and their repercussions in a colonised environment. He tries to unravel black people's diasporic experiences in Africa, the Caribbean, and England. This article examines Caryl Phillips' novel *A Distant Shore* (2003) through the lens of diasporic migration and heterogeneity. Migrant and refugee resentment has increased as a result of migration from developing to developed countries. While xenophobia is still prevalent in developed countries, it is also becoming more prevalent in developing countries. Xenophobia will continue to undermine migrants' rights and stymie efforts to maximise the development potential of migration. The themes in *A Distant Shore* are similar to those in Phillips' previous novels. On the other hand, he directly addresses the British nation and the problems that it has with immigration. He thus shows what is going wrong in Britain today. The novel's two protagonists can be seen as people who have to deal with the ramifications of Britain's demise, as well as the legacy of slavery in modern society. How Dorothy feels about being abandoned, and how Solomon, the other key character, deals with the hardships and persecution that immigrants confront in Britain. Hegemonic barriers are breached through migration under Phillips' vision of the 'new world order,' allowing for negotiation and interaction between diverse cultures. The research looks at how Caryl Phillips' displaced protagonists in the imperial metropolis come to rethink their identity in terms of their diasporic black British experience in his novels.

Keywords: *Ethnic Violence, Heterogeneity, Homogeneity, Migration, Xenophobia.*

1. Introduction

A Distant Shore by Caryl Phillips hums with ambition. The first line of the passage reads, "England has changed." (1) The novel is told in two voices: Dorothy Jones's and her African-American lover Solomon's. The narrative opens with a portrayal of exiles and refugees invading England, particularly after World War II. For example, the Caribbean arrived in droves after 1950, as if the Vikings and Danes, as well as the Normans, had long ago invaded England. Ethnic violence is a result of this influx. Right-wing, pro-white groups staged riots against immigrants, believing that they would rob them of their employment. Racism in public is still tolerated, despite laws such as the Race Relations Act. Solomon is an immigrant in the novel *A Distant Shore*. Dorothy's white neighbours despise him. Even Solomon is enraged by the hatred directed at him. The cops show up at her house one day. They inform Dorothy that Solomon Bartholomew was assassinated and his body was thrown into the canal. This was suspected

to be the work of a man named Paul. Dale and Gordon were both charged with a crime. The catastrophe is revealed by Miss Carla. Dorothy then experiences a state of giddiness, messed-up thoughts, and worry about her dream and England in general.

Caryl Phillips depicts not only the treatment of Africans by whites but also the treatment of Asians by whites. He demonstrates how bureaucrats are also unconcerned about immigrants' suffering. Gabriel, sometimes known as Solomon, is the protagonist of the second portion of *A Distant Shore*. Mr Gabriel saves his companion Said at the start of the novel, but night warder Collins refuses to help. Said, an Iraqi who admires England as a free country, is accused of a crime. He'll be in England soon. He worked as a teacher in Arabia before moving to England. Gabriel and Said are both currently incarcerated. Gabriel requests a doctor from the warder(n) so that Said's wounds can be treated. Dorothy's voice is highlighted in the novel's last portion. Rather, her voice is shaky. She wraps it out this way, with a nod to Solomon, who is no longer with us: They claim to be our guardians. Time is irrelevant in this place. They let me leave the curtains open at night, and I enjoy watching the shadows of the trees cast on my wall. This isn't Weston or Stoneleigh, as far as I can tell. In the distance, there's no viaduct. But I tried. My heart is still a desert. Solomon seemed to comprehend what I was saying. "This is not my home, and until they accept this, then I will be as purposefully silent as a bird in flight. Sometime before dawn, as the light 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).

Caryl Phillips depicts military assault in Solomon's homeland and the African Liberation Army's cruelty against Africans in this novel. In the flashback sequence, it is narrated as follows: Gabriel (later Solomon) stands in the pantry, watching and trying not to breathe. They'll start with Gabriel's elderly father. He examines his father's worn face, his confidence shattered by the experience of having to safeguard his family during his adult son's protracted absence. They chuckle as they force the elderly man to lie flat on his back with his arms stretched out to his sides like wings. Six khaki-clad troops are present. Gabriel quickly discovers that they all have a moniker. Cassius, Jacko, O. J., Brutus, Big Dog, Smokin' Joe. They are, however, young males, unlike Gabriel. They've now gathered the remainder of the family. Gabriel's father is kicked till he cries out in pain by Big Dog. He is still alive and well. He is asked whether he will not beg for compassion by Big Dog. Isn't he too proud of his family to beg for their lives? Gabriel is well aware that this is their game. Smokin' Joe places his gun to the back of Gabriel's father's head while the boys are playing with him. While the others laugh and mock his father, Smokin' Joe pulls the trigger casually, and the skull explodes. Gabriel's mother and two sisters begin to scream as small chunks of brain fly in all directions. Big Dog yells at Smokin' Joe in a phoney American accent, chastising him for ruining the celebration. The goons then deflower the two sisters before shooting them in front of Gabriel. Gabriel's mother is murdered. All of this takes place in Gabriel's mother nation, which is located in northern Africa.

Gabriel is filled with remorse for doing nothing while his family was being slaughtered. Gabriel arrives at his uncle's house, full of guilt and remorse, and discovers that everything is shrouded in darkness. Joshua, his uncle, is a fifty-year-old dark man. The house appears to be some sort of underground location. What are you going to do, Gabriel? They claim you slaughtered innocent women and children before fleeing. You know they'll keep looking for you. "I did nothing wrong, but I know I have to leave this country.' They will kill me if I stay here." (88) Joshua nods and speaks to himself.

You know, Gabriel, how can God ever forgive us for this shameful situation? Gabriel looks at his uncle, who is temporarily lost in his thoughts. A few moments later Joshua climbs slowly to his feet. A weary Joshua takes his sister's mainchild by the shoulder and he gestures to the other men in the room. He speaks in a whisper. Blood is blood, Gabriel. I want nothing more than to take you in as a family, but these men have all paid two thousand dollars to leave. They have sold everything that they have.' But I must leave,' protests Gabriel. This is not my home anymore. (88).

As Gabriel walks down the street, he senses the approaching dawn. He meets a friend-shopkeeper Felix, although he is a member of the opposing ruling tribe. Felix lends Gabriel a few hundred dollars in response to his request, allowing him to flee the country. Gabriel eventually comes to Joshua's street, where he slows to a walk and tries to gather his thoughts. He climbs the stairs, oblivious to the noise he is making, and when he reaches the storeroom, he bangs quietly but firmly on the door, which opens before him. Joshua looks at Gabriel as if he's looking at a lunatic. Gabriel understands that if he is to live again, he must learn to let go of all memories of his previous existence. There can be no sentiment. Hurling blindly down this highway, he knows that if he is lucky, the past will soon be truly past and that with every gasp of the acrid air beneath the heavy tarpaulin, life is taking him beyond this nightmare and to a new place and beginning. Then Gabriel and Joshua begin their truck journey. They've arrived at an airport, and Gabriel is now on his way to England. Joshua travels by ship with a group of twelve people, including his nephew. They have finally arrived in Europe.

Gabriel turns to face Katharine, a young woman in the corner. She had been in one of the other groups, but she had found it difficult to understand everything they were saying because they did not speak the same language. Caryl Phillips hopes to demonstrate that there are many diverse tribal groups in Africa, each with their language and customs, but they all face the same problem. Caryl Phillips depicts the refugees' journeys beautifully. The refugees arrive in Italy, and then in France. Stuart Lewis, a lawyer, is introduced in the context of the refugees. Gabriel's family massacre is something the lawyer wants to talk about. Gabriel also wishes to investigate Said's situation. Because of the wars and harassment, the female passenger Katherine (also known as Amma) had a similar narrative. Gabriel examines the exhausted crowd, which includes various faces and languages that he is unfamiliar with, and he notices that they have embraced him as their leader. Despite his desire to protect Amma, he is hesitant to formalise their agreement, so he walks away silently toward the tents.

Then there's the bartering for acquiring refugee status in England: Please pay attention,' says an agent. As he speaks, "The man's eyes dart around in his head as he speaks. I take you to England, but you decide quickly. I can take only three." (123) Gabriel stands up and stares in disbelief at this man. He thinks he's French because he speaks with the same accent as the man who led them into the camp, but his actions have wild energy to them. The man turns to look at Amma and quickly sneaks away. He informs them that he requires USD 200 from each of them. , "he tells. It is a good price, ' You make a new life, new friends, and forget your stinking country. In England everything is given to you. Food, clothes, house. You live like a king." (124) Gabriel and Amma follow the three men out of the camp and down a deserted, winding route where the hedgerows have blocked all view, giving Gabriel the impression that they are travelling down a long tunnel. Gabriel tries to memorise the path as night falls because he knows he will have to return to the camp later that night. The guard tells Amma, her infant, and Gabriel to lie flat aboard the Paris-London fast express once they arrive in Paris. They act in this manner. Katherine discusses seduction as well as the loss of family honour,

Joshua, on the other hand, has vanished. Bright, an African, says it best: "The Chinese man told me that the only route into England for those without money is by boat." We will be defeated if we do not attempt. Bright takes a breath and says, "This dude says he'll join us." Bright pauses once more, his gaze fixed on Gabriel. It's either this or going to Paris. I am, nevertheless, an Englishman. We are only respected by white people because we do not respect ourselves. If you cut my heart open, you'll see the word England stamped on it. "I speak the language, therefore I am going to England to claim my house and my stipend." (134). It emphasises how the world wars and colonialism caused a great deal of difficulty for blacks and refugees. Gabriel is buoyed by his newfound hope, and he thinks to himself, "I want to forget Africa and those people; I am an Englishman now. I am English and nobody will stop me from going home. Not you, not these people, nobody". (134).

Gabriel detects the scent of the water but remains silent. They continue to make their way down the dimly lit path. There's one more flashback storey to tell. Gabriel's storey is somewhere out there. His father was a successful moneylender in a North African tribe. He was in command of the area. Then, out of nowhere, an invading force began wreaking havoc by slaughtering Gabriel's entire family. That is why Gabriel decided to join a South African liberation army. Gabriel worked in a hardware store and

also worked in an office in that country. He had recently expressed an interest in working for the government. The Liberation Army was stationed in a secluded location. Gabriel took on the title 'Hawk' while he was there. Villages were even taken and looted by this group. Even they were capable of murder. Gabriel relates this old narrative of his life before he returned to his village and witnessed the murder of his own family. In the storey, there is a big paradox. This is the sinner recoiling from sin. Gabriel disguises himself as Solomon after he arrives in England. Perhaps Katherine had said it to him with a Bible reference. The novel's second portion is just too complicated and agonising to read.

The novel begins with this foregrounding statement: England has changed. These days it's difficult to tell who's from around here and who's not. Who belongs and who's a stranger. It's disturbing. It doesn't feel right. (3) There includes a description of the hamlet Stoneleigh near Weston in the north of England, where the protagonist, Dorothy Jones, a working-class type teacher, resides. During WWII, the area was extensively bombarded, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher eventually shuttered the pits there. The architecture is most likely the only trace of the past in this area. The terraces on both sides of the main road are typical miners' dwellings, constructed of a dull red brick. The original occupants would have had to bathe in the kitchen and use the shared toilets at the end of the street. These houses, on the other hand, have all been re-plumbed, and the mud has been blasted off the facades of the majority of them, making them appear almost quaint. This depicts how postwar people lived in poverty. Stoneleigh is located on a short steep hill with a view of the main road. Dorothy represents England's diversity. She lacks xenophobia and a bigoted attitude toward Asians and Africans. Dorothy Jones, a retired teacher, is the main character in the tale. Dorothy discusses her ageing parents as well as his father's World War II diversion. She claims to be the only one who has completed university education.

She pursued a career as a music teacher. She had a sister named Sheila, who later became estranged from the family. When she needs to consult her doctor, Dr Williams, she seeks Solomon's assistance. Dorothy describes Solomon, the Negro, as a helpful member of the hamlet. Brian Jones is the protagonist of the third segment. He refers to his wife Dorothy Jones. After he departed, the silence grew louder and threatened to swallow her up until she recognised Mahmood, a hotelier. Caryl Phillips does not overlook the importance of Indian origin immigrants in England, as they are the second largest group after the English. Mahmood was born in India and is Punjabi by descent. Dorothy was Mahmood's admirer. The telling of Punjabi Mahmood's storey exemplifies Caryl Phillips' ability to bring out all of an ethnic group's idiosyncrasies. Child marriage is a problem in India, according to Caryl Phillip. Mahmood told Dorothy about his first marriage in his Punjabi village when he was twelve years old, and how his family had orchestrated everything without regard for his feelings. Mahmood told her he was sold as a mule and used as a bargaining chip in a family feud.

He told her about his immature sex efforts with his fourteen-year-old bride, who acquired an appetite that a twelve-year-old kid couldn't fulfil. He revealed that he beat his girlfriend in an attempt to master her, and he recalled how she had run away numerous times, and how her father had once been forced to bring her back by her long black hair. This is a violation of the law. Mahmood stood up and thanked his father-in-law for reuniting him with his wife. Mahmood decided to move to Leicester, England, to join his older brother, who owned three restaurants. He expected to have little trouble getting a well-paid work of some kind in Mrs Margaret Thatcher's country, and once he had saved enough money, his goal was to attend university and study law or medicine. Mahmood fantasised about returning to his village triumphantly as the region's most powerful man, and he planned to spit in the face of the woman who had publically humiliated him. As Dorothy knows, Mahmood operates a small news agency in a small town in the north of England without a cathedral or a university. Later, Mahmood, who had married Feroza, an Englishwoman, abandoned Leicester for a little town called Weston. Dorothy does not hold Mahmood responsible for her current state of destitution since she recognises her husband, Brian, as the true perpetrator. She sat patiently through too many years of his speeches about the advantages of aesthetically built patios and breakfast bars and the superiority of South African whites over French dialogues in which she was never asked for her opinion.

The novelist, Caryl Phillips, then weaves together both Gabriel's (Solomon's) and Dorothy Jones' (Jones') storylines. Dorothy is determined to ensure that the dominant story is male, so she reveals very little about her own life. After all, his storey is filled with romance, betrayal, migration, sacrifice, and success. Mahmood is a big hit. Her storey revolves around a single word: abandonment. She notices that neither store seems to be preoccupied with the term "love," but she ignores this observation. Mahmood then asked her about her life, specifically her spouse, one evening during the second month of their agreement. Given that she was lying in bed with Brian at the time, she reddened, implying that she was still carrying the emotional residue of a relationship she had been attempting to forget for the past five years. He abandoned me and fled with a younger woman. She took a breath and stopped. She then moved back to Weston after leaving Birmingham. When her husband, Brian, ran off with another woman, Dorothy was urged to leave her position as a music teacher.

Mahmood had listened intently and raised an eyebrow now and then, but she realised her narrative was not particularly intriguing. She had lived in a tidy semi-detached house for the previous five years and supported herself as the music mistress at the local grammar school, which had abandoned all standards shortly after her return and had become the local comprehensive unit. She became somewhat of a television addict in the evenings, viewing shows that she admits have little value other than to pass the time. She prefers reality shows and courtroom dramas, but now and then she will watch a documentary, especially if it is about animals. Meanwhile, her ex-banker husband owns a bed and breakfast (which he insists on calling a pension) for affluent British tourists on the Costa del Sol in Spain. Dorothy used to teach since she couldn't think of anything else to do. It's too late to change careers, and she can't imagine herself in any other field. The truth is that she seemed to lose her enthusiasm for teaching music at the same time that English schoolchildren seemed to lose their enthusiasm for learning. And the piano isn't exactly a well-known instrument. Dorothy falls in love with Geoff Waverley, another white man.

Dorothy, a 55-year-old divorcee, harassed Waverley, a 40-year-old man. As a result, Dorothy suffers a tremendous amount of embarrassment. She then travels to London to see her sister, Sheila. Sheila and her husband Roger were treated to a meal whenever she and Brian travelled to London from Birmingham, whether for a play or a performance or on one of Brian's business travels. Roger later divorced Sheila. Sheila's career changed as a result of the transfer, and she eventually quit the legal profession to work full-time for the local Labour Party. At their mother's burial two years later, Dorothy met her sister's friend Maria for the first and last time. Sheila might have said something to her younger sister if it hadn't been for Brian's angry words. Their father was both too unwell and too grieved to notice that Sheila had brought her "lover" to the burial. As it was, everyone managed to remain nice to one another, and then her father died within a year, but Sheila and Maria chose not to attend the funeral.

Roger sent flowers, but Brian tore the card up and threw it away, claiming that he had never liked Roger's phoney demeanour. After Brian left Dorothy, she left Birmingham and returned to her hometown. Dorothy sits in her bungalow at the top of the hill in Stoneleigh, a community five miles outside of Weston, where she grew up. She is keeping track of the weeks. I haven't written in over two months. It's a fresh start in a place where no one knows her. She acquired her bungalow over the phone after seeing a sketch of Stoneleigh in the local paper. The phrase 'a fresh development' had a comfortable ring to it. Selling her Weston home was unexpectedly simple, thanks to her determination to accept the first offer she received. Finally, a reasonable offer was made, and the buyer, a young Asian doctor, was eager to move in right away. She was not disappointed when she finally boarded the bus to Stoneleigh. The cottage was clean, well-equipped, and just what she had envisioned. The houses in the opposite cul-de-sac have recently been completed, but the surrounding area remains a muddy field. Nonetheless, she is content. She notices Solomon, the man next door, cleaning his car through her window. As if it were a valued possession, he keeps it carefully stored outside his home. On this gloomy afternoon, no one else is visible save for this man. Just this lonely man, who washes his car with a focus that suggests a rough existence is informing his right hand's circular motion. Every step he makes appears to be an attempt to erase a history he no longer wants to remember. She understands when she looks at him. Caryl Phillips also depicts the diversity of white people. Mike, his Irish character, has an

affection for Gabriel, which could be because they, too, were colonised by the English and empathised with Gabriel's anguish.

In a situation in England, Solomon was assisted by Mike, an Irish driver. Mike worked as a truck driver on the continent. Solomon was asked about his stay in England by this caretaker. He claimed to have been a soldier in Africa (rather than the Caribbean) who fought and lost his family in a slaughter. In England, he was exiled. He was at ease. He said nothing about Dorothy, Feliz, Amma, Joshua, or Brian, however. He said nothing about Hawk (a member of the Liberation Army in Africa) or Gabriel. England made some form of arrangement for him. He explains to Mike how he came to be the village's plumber, carpenter, and night watchman. Mike's masters, the Anderson couple, assisted Solomon in finding a place to live. Solomon managed to live at Stoneleigh with Anderson's help. He appeared to have become a British citizen. Mr Anderson began driving Solomon after a few months of working on the construction site. Mike would relieve Mr Anderson and take up the job of providing Solomon with driving skills whenever he was available. Master Anderson once said,

“You see, Solomon, it's just that this isn't a very big island and we don't have that much room. People think that other countries should take you first because we've done our bit.” He paused and looked away. I'm sorry, Solomon, but some folk think these things. That you just want an Olekar 200 easy living, or 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)

While racism refers to the process of categorising and marginalising members of another group because of perceived racial inferiority, xenophobia and the resulting hostility and dislike stem from a fear of ‘foreigners’, who are viewed as a threat to the society's cultural purity and homogeneity. 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 multicultural can and should be orchestrated by the government in the public interest” (2). As a consequence of this desire, “diversity becomes a dangerous feature of society. It brings only weakness, chaos, and confusion” (2). It is thus not surprising that immigrants are not welcome in Britain as they form a primary threat to society's homogeneity. In *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack* Gilroy relates the desire for homogeneity and the loss of imperial prestige to one another. Alien cultures are seen to form a threat to the British nation as their arrival supposedly means national decline, weakness and diversity (46). Xenophobia is derived from the Greek words Xenos, which means stranger or foreigner, and Phobos, which means dread. It implies ‘fear of the outsider.’ As a result, xenophobia is defined as a fear of foreigners and outsiders, and xenophobes are people who have negative sentiments toward that ‘out-groups’. Definition of xenophobia quoted in the book entitled *Modern-Day Xenophobia: Critical Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on the Roots of Anti-Immigrant Prejudice* as “attitudes, prejudices, and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity” (qtd. Oksana Yakushko 13).

Minority groups in England have become increasingly concerned about xenophobic violence and crimes as they become targets of political, social, and economic discontent. The depth of xenophobia's experience and its reactionary measures is frequently linked to the migrant group's cultural, racial, and ethnic heritage. Enoch Powell's racial rants in 1968 are suggestive of a symptom of paranoia that exists throughout England. In his infamous Rivers of Blood speech, he remarked about the black's immigration to Britain as follows: “It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its funeral pyre” (OOWK MEDIA). Immigrants have been pushed to the outside of society as a result of such attitudes, and their situation is horrible. In this novel, xenophobia is a recurring theme. The character of Dorothy's father exemplifies this xenophobia. Dorothy experiences prejudice after a long social interaction with Solomon.

2. Conclusion

The author, Phillips, describes England's prejudice, which resulted in the black man's murder because he refused to return to Africa. The novel also depicts the unacceptability of blacks in its society, as well as the reasons for the Africans' exodus from their homelands. Caryl Phillips brings the diverse society of England to life. The racial mix-up has numerous ramifications. It has altered England's demographics; immigrant groups have begun to flourish and contribute in their unique ways. Racial mixing has both positive and harmful consequences. The novel's recurring themes include growing ethnic violence against black people and xenophobia.

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