Chapter II

Dialectics of Postcolonial Relationships:
Mapping the Psychodynamics of the Colonial Binaries
in Caryl Phillips's Fiction

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One of the fundamental concerns of postcolonial studies is to understand the complex dialectics that evolve in the relationship between the blacks and the whites or the colonised and the coloniser or the slave and the slaver in their colonial encounters/contact zones. European colonial ideologies and discourses are considered to have exercised enormous impacts on constituting a hierarchy of social order and viewing the humanity on the principle that legitimises the centrality of whiteness and the marginality of blackness. While such principles are held to be responsible for European incursions and colonial hegemonic relationships, there appears to evolve, behind the facade of such connections, a range of psychic coordinates that structure and conduct these relationships. The present chapter, by analysing certain 'colonial conditions' in Caryl Phillips's "Heartland" in *Higher Ground, Cambridge, "*Pagan Coast" in *Crossing the River*, *The Nature of Blood* and *Dancing in the Dark,* attempts to discover some of these peculiar psychological mechanisms and dynamics that operate in the colonial binary relationships.

Colonial subjection in its various manifestations is a condition of human oppression, and it involves the construction and perpetuation of an enforced sense of inferiority and degeneracy of the lives or the cultures of the oppressed through sustained colonial discourses and ideologies. Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *Empire Writes Back* observe, "In order to maintain authority over the 'Other' in a

colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the 'Other' as radically different from the self, yet at the same time it must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to valorize control over it" (101–102). The colonial relationships, therefore, substantiate the ways in which discourses and ideologies authorise social, cultural, psychological and political aims of colonisation. In certain cases, such relationships are 'hegemonic' implying that there is an 'oblique' consent granted to it by the colonised. As Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia observe, "Hegemony, initially a term referring to the dominance of one state within a confederation, is now generally understood to mean 'dominance by consent' (44). For Antonio Gramsci (1891), hegemony is maintained through the dominant group's ability to convince the dominated about the relative similarity of interests, in which colonial ruling is made possible not by coercion, but by consent (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key Concepts* 116–17). Cultural imperialism exerts such a hegemonic control over the cultural scenario of the dominated and presents it as the common interests of both the groups. Thus, this hegemonic relationship reveals two aspects of colonial psychology: one, the coloniser's motives, interests and intentions for domination and two, in certain extent, the psychic state of the colonised that accepts or acknowledges cultural imperialism or colonial subjugation.

The section "Heartland" in *Higher Ground* describes the life of an unnamed African collaborator working between the Europeans and the Africans in a slave fort in the west coast of Africa at the end of the eighteenth century. The position of the unnamed collaborator in the Fort is in a predicament, as he has to act as a silent spectator and facilitator for the white man's business in the slaves.

Having been captured by his own people and sold to the European factors of the local kings, he is taught the colonisers' language and their ways of trade. It is this knowledge that compels him to act as a facilitator for the business between the European slavers and the Africans, and also as an interpreter between the slave owners and slaves who are shackled to be transported across the Atlantic. Though working in the slave Fort, the collaborator is precariously caught between his psychological distress, stemming from his inability and helplessness to dissociate himself from the European collaboration. Finally, when he decides to react to the white man's cruel treatment towards the village girl, whom one of the slavers Price molests, he is shackled and is about to be taken to the other side of the World where he foresees misery and death.

Anne C. Bailey notes that the European and American slavers, generally, through their artful strategies and tactful relations maneuvered systematic modes of operations in the slave business to gain acceptance and approval of the local tribes and leaders. One of such components was employing the locals to assist them on the coast as canoe men, servants, messengers, gong beaters, washerwomen, porters and translators (136). The collaborator in the novel has been assigned with such a role by the European slavers. A central aspect of the collaborator's subjectivity, as he believes, is that his position as a 'go–between' or intermediary has been thrust upon him. He says, "Some years ago a king's trader captured me and sold me to one of their factors. He, in turn, taught me the principles of their language and methods of trading" (*HG* 44). The African king's factor, obviously a European slaver according to the system of slave trade, transforms collaborator and his cultural attributes into one of European model by

teaching him their language and inculcating in him their ways in slave trade. According to the collaborator, not only is he taken as a slave by the colonial factors, but he is also transformed into "… the most unlikely of the creatures" (*HG* 13), a colonial mechanism by imploding his self into European standards.

As Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia remark, "The struggle for domination, as Foucault shows, can be both systematic and hidden" (*Edward Said* 85). In the case of collaborator, his subjection to slavery by his native king and European slavers has been systematic, while inculcation of colonial culture with its language is operated through the hidden forms of cultural domination. The hegemonic power relationship with the collaborator is established and maintained by instructing him and encouraging him in colonisers' language and their ways. What keeps the interests of white slavers in the collaborator, for the time being, is not mere subjugation, but through civilising him the European intention is to keep him to their side and thus make the slave trade move more easily. In Edward Said's analysis, culture is one of the most powerful tools that the coloniser uses to wield power over the colonised. Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia comment, "Culture is both a function of and a source of identity [and].... Imperial culture can be the most powerful agent of imperial hegemony in the colonised world" (*Edward Said* 88). The European slavers in the Fort operate with a compelling force on the collaborator and turns his psychic space into a colonial space of cultural imperialism and thus manages to get his participation in their business of slave trade. The collaborator's silent 'consent,' part of hegemonic control, in this regard is demonstrated through his 'willingness' to continue in his position without an attempt to escape the structures of domination, while he does so on another

occasion to save the girl from the village. Peter Ives observes this aspect of consent in the process of colonial hegemony,

> Both Foucault and Gramsci see that power rarely operates in a simple unidirectional manner, with one person or group of people holding power and using it against another who is totally powerless. More often, those in dominant positions need to jockey and compete in order to exert their force and influence. And, more importantly, relatively powerless people acquiesce, consent to, enthusiastically encourage, or resist the use of such power. (142)

In the case of the collaborator this aspect of consent becomes significant in constructing his subjectivity and the most preferable method of that hegemonic relationship is achieved by instructing the collaborator in colonisers' language.

Once such a 'hegemonic' relationship of master – slave is established, what follows then is to sustain it through repeated colonial stereotypes. The Governor in the slave Fort utilises strategies of colonial stereotypes to reiterate the subject position of the collaborator and his people, while attempting to constitute their own colonial authority. For Homi Bhabha, "Stereotype … is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated …" (*Location of Culture* 66). These stereotypes about the colonised are constantly represented because "it is not self–evident that colonial relationships should exist at all, something needs to supply an explanation for colonialism" (Huddart 35). Therefore, the colonial authority of the Europeans in the slave Fort enforces the collaborator and his

people to internalise the stereotypes that are founded on the principles of 'similarity and difference.' Similarity and difference are some of the colonial tactics by which the colonisers achieve and sustain its power and authority. David Huddart observes this aspect in *Homi K. Bhabha*, "Colonial discourse at once demands both similarity and difference in the figures of the colonised... (65). The Governor with a civilising mission in Africa, in an attempt to construct the subjectivity of the collaborator, lays emphasis on the fundamental difference between the European and the African by saying "… I have met your people in their feral state, many of them, and their near state of perfect nakedness, their baseness of tongue, and ignorance of Christianity makes it reasonably obvious that they can never be happy until they have digested some of the basic lessons of our civilization" (*HG* 51). The shrewd Governor, while fixing the collaborator against the backdrop of his villagers' ignorance and depravity, also exposes collaborator's present relative 'merit' against the 'lack' of his people. At the beginning, the Governor tells the collaborator, "In your clothes and manners, you are truly the most unlikely of *creatures*," at the same time informing him of his own fears, typical to colonisers, of African "cannibalism and his fantasies of being eaten alive" (*HG* 13; emphasis added). While the Governor draws such a drastic difference between the Africans and the Europeans, the similarity of collaborator's position to that of European is also highlighted by showing his mastery in the colonisers' language and his inculcation in European culture:

> …it is only now that I have witnessed the abject barbarity of your savage people that I can fully appreciate the distance – the somewhat remarkable distance that you have travelled along the

path of civilization. That you can read and write places you in a

position superior over many people in this fort. (*HG* 52)

What the Governor secures, by foregrounding the colonial knowledge and stereotypes, is the subjectivity and coloniality of the collaborator and the Africans. This enables them gaining the cooperation of the collaborator and the Africans in the colonial trade of slavery.

The collaborator suffers intense psychological distress in his occupation in the Fort owing to his sense of alienation from his own people. Basically, he suffers from a sense of guilt in his incapability in distancing himself from his present position and powerlessness in his failure in rescuing his people from their misfortunes. He contemplates, "…I have no excuses for my present circumstances, they were thrust upon me and I accepted them" (*HG* 44). He is slighted, when he goes to the village to ask for the girl for Price's sexual gratification, by one of the elders who by spiting on his face tells, "you are filth." But immediately he "wipe[s] away the spittle and choose[s] *not to retaliate*" (*HG* 24; emphasis added). This inability to "retaliate" originates from his deep sense of helplessness. Again in the same vein of psychological struggle he reflects, "Yet I, who stayed behind, am expected to be something *other than I am*" (*HG* 24; emphasis added). On another occasion he tells the village girl, "I *could not help* you because I was *frightened*" (*HG* 45; emphasis added), and while reflecting upon his inability to rescue the girl, he confesses, "I am *powerless* to help" (*HG* 55; emphasis added). The collaborator's is a situation in which his present is fractured and the past and the future unhinged from his miserable life that his survival becomes a burden for him and he has no escape from it. He laments: "I merely survive, and if survival is

a crime then I am guilty" (*HG* 24). To him, survive means to endure a sense of guilt all through his life.

However, what comes to the rescue of the collaborator is his ability to forget, an art, he says, he has mastered exceptionally well.

> I sit and wait and try hard not to throw my mind either backwards or forwards into new territory, for it is almost certain to be territory too painful to inhabit. Draining the mind is a tedious but necessary business. I am grateful, and would thank the Gods (if there were any to thank) that I have finally mastered this art of forgetting – of murdering the memory. (*HG* 24)

Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, while discussing Orlando Patterson's (1982) comprehensive study on slavery, notes: "… the master–slave relation was founded on interpersonal and institutional violence. The master's absolute power and the slave's total powerlessness rested on the use and threat of violence. Forced to a state of powerlessness and helplessness, the slave [becomes] a human surrogate and instrument of the master's self and will" (122). To some degree, in the novel, the powerlessness experienced by the collaborator stems from two sources; first, from a fear of physical torture and degradation that are likely to follow the resistance and second, his intimacy with the European colonisers. However, these two psychic dynamics bind him together with distressing psychological disorientation.

As one finds in the case of Bertram in *A State of Independence*, the collaborator persuades his memories to a forced forgetfulness. His mastering of

'the art of forgetting' or 'murdering the memory' implies that he has been constantly trying at this ever since he has undertaken this responsibility. In his psychological distress and disorientating moments, his existence derives some worth only in his capacity to obliterate his former life in which he enjoyed freedom and respect. This selective forgetting or suppression of recurrent painful memories is a conscious effort to push the painful and guilt–provoking thoughts, memories and emotions into forgetfulness. In Freudian psychology, this act of suppression is a conscious decision to remove something troubling from immediate awareness until a later date (Gibson 799). Suppression is a familiar process of consciously and purposely directing attention away from troubling thoughts or recollections, of not mulling over things and of letting time and the ordinary curve of forgetting do their work (Thompson 144). This selective forgetting that the collaborator makes is not a habitual one or something that usually happens with people after certain traumatic experiences. In this traumatic situation the mind resorts to a defense mechanism in which the painful experiences are repressed to unconscious part of the mind. But in the case of collaborator, he compels the memory to collapse and it is a forced effort by him that serves the purpose of temporarily forgetting his guilt–provoking collaboration.

One of the other significant areas of attention in collaborator's story is his ambivalent positions incurred through his relationship with the white slavers. The collaborator is held in a moral predicament due to his association with the white slavers, because in spite of his deep sense of betrayal of his people and intensely suffering from it, he privately enjoys a significant amount of safety and security in that position. This is the reason why his position becomes one that is sustained by

'consent' in the hegemonic relationship. His job in the slave Fort as a collaborator and translator, which is constituted systematically through colonial stereotypes, renders him into two conflicting situations of 'pleasure' and 'punishment.' The observation made by Homi Bhabha invites attention to these consequences of colonial maneuvering over the psyche of the colonised. He says "Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a 'subject people' through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited (*Location of Culture* 70). The 'pleasure' is incited in the collaborator by offering him the 'privileged' position of a collaborator and translator. The acceptance of such a lucrative position saves him from being transported to other side of the world as a slave with its consequences, while his own people suffer deplorably from it. If the colonial subjugation provides him a 'strange satisfaction,' it correspondingly exerts immense pressure over him by wielding a colonial control. An imposing surveillance of the coloniser keeps the collaborator under constant watch, and his visibility to the coloniser becomes essentially a 'trap.' For Michel Foucault, in surveillance, sight confers power for the observer and visibility is powerlessness for the observed (*Key Concepts* 226). The collaborator is constantly placed under the visibility and surveillance of white slavers in the slave Fort and when he undermines the rules in Fort, he is caught and punished for that. Paradoxically, though he enjoys an amount of 'freedom' in the slave Fort, his sense of freedom is regulated and restricted by a continuous fear of violence, in case that 'freedom' exceeds beyond its definition for him. Primarily, the relationship with the coloniser provides the collaborator moments of psychological contradictions and

he has to wait to extricate himself from it until his 'weakness' for the girl compels him to do it in the end.

Octave Mannoni emphasises that colonialism creates a great amount of psychological pressures and tensions in the colonisers as well. He argues, "... the European colonial is himself more powerfully affected than the native by the new situation and he soon loses the qualities he acquired in Europe..." (196). Though the gravity of the consequences of colonialism for the colonised and the coloniser is varied and contested on certain domains, the implication in Mannoni's words is clear that it is not only the colonised who undergoes psychological damage, but the coloniser also experiences tremendous psychological distress in the colonial locations. Mannoni analyses colonisation more as a process of psychological projection in which the European, who is driven by a sense of inferiority due to a "grave lack of sociability combined with a pathological urge to dominate" (102), endeavours to seek compensation for his inferiority complex. In the ensuing struggle for the autonomous self, the coloniser projects his inner tensions and pressures, which he represses in his own land. Though Mannoni's arguments cannot be held as an exclusive case of justification for colonialism in the world, some of his observations throw light on the psychological dynamics of colonisers in the colonial locations. Mannoni observes,

> ... that the personality of the colonial is made up, not of characteristics acquired during and through experience of the colonies, but of traits, very often in the nature of a complex, already in existence in a latent and repressed form in the European's psyche, traits which the colonial experience has simply brought to the

surface and made manifest. Social life in Europe exerts a certain pressure on the individual, and that pressure keeps the personality in a given shape; once it is removed, however, the outlines of the personality change and swell, thus revealing the existence of internal pressures which had up to then passed unnoticed. (97)

The slave Fort in "Heartland" section in *Higher Ground* becomes a site for the exposition of the psychic dynamics of the colonisers. The reason for the presence of the European slavers in the slave Fort and their ruthless business in human trade in the west coast of Africa partly accentuates Mannoni's arguments. Therefore, the two colonisers the Governor and Price, "the Bible and the gun" (*HG* 76), become proper 'objects' for a psychological study of the colonisers in the colonial locations. Although the Governor's mission in Africa is a civilising one, he finds chances in it for material profits and exploitation. Meanwhile, Price, as his name suggests his motivations in the colonial system of slave trade, is portrayed as an embodiment of cruelty and as a man of bestial passions. Thus, "Heartland" demonstrates how the inhibited passions of the Europeans in their land find an outlet in the presence of colonised.

The psychological imperative for recognition in the Governor and the colonial desire for domination in Price mark some of the peculiar aspects of their European psyche. Price is viewed as a reckless 'coloniser' who looks forward to guide his impulses and desires regarded as unacceptable in his own homeland toward actions that are more 'acceptable' in the location of colonisation. His colonial urge to dominate the 'other' is explicated through his brutal treatment of the slaves and his violent sexual act with the village girl. Essentially these actions

bring to surface his latent and repressed psyche that Mannoni attributes to the European coloniser. It is also apparent that Price's repressed desires for power and authority are unleashed when he deliberately undermines the authority of the Governor. The fierce disagreement that ensue between the Governor and Price explicitly affirm a blatant struggle for colonial power. Price's answers to the questions of the Governor about the village girl become very superficial in content and impertinent in tone. As a result, the petrified Governor reaches to the point of asking Price if it is his desire "to completely undermine his authority" (*HG 31*). But Price's reply testifies to the tension and the dialectics of colonial power relations that exist between the colonisers in the colonial locations, exposing undoubtedly its psychological implications. Price says,

> We stand … at the edge of the world. The rules that bind normal men have no place in this land.… Here rank has little to do with privilege of birth – it is a matter of your ability to lead men and instil in them some respect of your position. Now who is here to strip off my epaulettes? …. Here is no superior officer for you to report me to, no society to sneer and point finger at me for we are society, we men inside this Fort … here sweating in this hellish climate with these savages there comes a point at which your rank and order must fall away and be replaced by natural order. (*HG* 31)

Price's argument reveals how he has experienced 'inferiority complex' in his own land that Mannoni discovers in the European. Price finds the African soil as a suitable place to unbridle his sublimated passion for supremacy and authority, that he says, "The rules that bind normal men have no place *in this land*" (*HG* 31;

emphasis added). In his hectoring speech, he destabilises the distinction of class and rank, and the more he is determined to capture power and struggle to dominate, the more he becomes a ruthless coloniser.

The psychological distress and suffering of the Governor become intense as his authority and superiority being challenged and defied. The Governor realises that he is no more recognised by his European associate Price and so his condition apparently falls to the same mediocre position of the collaborator. Under these circumstances, the Governor needs to reiterate his sense of self–worth and value from a person at least who is inferior and who definitely recognises his position. Therefore, he asks the collaborator, "'Do you see me as a man? Do you see me as your superior? I am curious….I would like to know how you view me'" (*HG* 52). Mannoni is throughout arguing in his book that colonialists exploit the psychic dispositions of the colonised in order to achieve their own satisfactions. In this case of the Governor, it is to be assumed that his life in the slave Fort is formulated on unreal relationships while he simultaneously exploits others and becomes a victim of European rivalry for power and authority. It is 'unreal' because as Mannoni observes, "What [the colonisers] project on to the colonial inhabitant, in fact, is not [their] 'mental derangement', but [their] most elementary and deeply–hidden fears and desires..." (198). It is this psychic character of the Governor that becomes apparent in his close relationship with the collaborator. Thus, in fact, the Governor becomes a *captive* in his own tormenting psyche and remains "Cocooned … in his own misery" (*HG* 32), while, as a European coloniser, his 'coloniality' becomes more emphatic.

Transatlantic slavery exercised considerable amount of transformations on the cultural consciousness of the people of Africa. Their displacement from their land, history and culture, and the ensuing dispersals created deep impacts by constituting a fractured identity in them. Many of the blacks, who happened to cross the cultural frontiers of Europe after dreadful journeys of Middle Passage, believed that a new world will be unlocked before them with immense possibilities by assimilating into European cultural life. For centuries, having been imprisoned in their racial inferiority and unable to find an outlet to the social acceptability, inculcation in Europe's cultural life offered many of the blacks a hope of a new life. Thus, those who could procure a chance to be instructed in European ways of life, especially in language and religion, grabbed the opportunities passionately. Along with such acts of cultural assimilation, an equivalent stance is demonstrated from the side of African to divest of their 'inferior' African cultural traits, which they believed to be an impediment to the acculturation in European way of living. That is to say, on the real life situations, many of the Negroes believed that a life in Europe depended not only in absorbing the European cultural attributes, but also in relinquishing one's African 'racial properties.' The implication and connotation of this awareness were far–reaching because it not only described the plight of being blacks in Europe, but also showed them to the core what it meant to be both black and white with a double consciousness. Caryl Phillips examines the implications of such paradoxes in the lives of African slaves/freed–slaves in England during the days of transatlantic slavery and after.

Phillips, through his novel *Cambridge*, shows the dangers of European–educated African Negroes, trapped in a false consciousness of being an

'Englishman'. Cambridge, captured by his own people as a slave and deported to England, enjoys the benevolence of his master and marries a white woman called Anna. He is sent to learn the Bible and is asked to be a missionary across England, where in one of the villages Anna dies. Thereupon, he is advised to go to his own African land as a missionary. But unfortunately, on board, his money is stolen and recaptured and is sold to the Caribbean plantation owners as a slave. There in the island, he stands deprived of his Englishness and beset by the disturbing advances of English plantation supervisor Mr. Brown towards his new 'wife.' As a Christian moralist and devotee, he wants to talk to Brown amicably about the whole problem. He decides to meet Brown as he returns from the church. But at their meeting Brown initiates an attack on Cambridge and in the ensuing scuffle Brown is murdered. At the end, Cambridge awaits death penalty for his crime.

Cambridge finds his life in England contrary to his fears during his Middle Passage across the Atlantic. England renders Cambridge admissibility into whites' world and their cultural territories. His attainment of freedom from slavery and consequent opportunities to be inculcated in English ideals transform him essentially into a "black–Englishman" (*CA* 147). As a freed slave in England, Cambridge's [Thomas (black Tom) and David Henderson in England] entry into the cultural fabric of England becomes smooth and easy. His 'Englishness' is derived through his rigorous efforts in learning to read and write English, by imbibing the Christian faith and by marrying the poor English lady Anna. The evolution of Cambridge's cultural consciousness exhibits a sudden shift when he is offered with the benefits of indulging in colonisers' cultural traits. As one who grieved immensely over the loss of his African cultural life and as one who

expressed reluctance even to accept an English name at the time of deportation to England, Cambridge, now in England, shows excessive interest in absorbing English ideals. Earlier, for Cambridge, coloniser's language aboard the slave ship resembled only "…nothing more civilized than the manic chatter of the baboons" (*CA* 135), but now in England, he strives hard to better his chances by becoming 'English.*'*

Education in English language and Christianity affords Cambridge remarkable confidence as an 'English man.' Fanon discusses how learning a colonial language provides psychological impetus for the colonised through the instance of Antillean Negro. "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (*Black Skin* 25). Fanon also notes, *"*To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (*Black Skin* 8). Cambridge realises that any potential recognition in English society requires him to have the hold on English language and the European's Christian religion, which, he strongly believes, also would transform his 'blackness' to 'whiteness.' Mirja Kuurola argues that Cambridge, by occupying "the roles of both insider and outsider … extricates himself from those features of his identity which doom him, to an outside position and foregrounds the features which qualify him as a Briton" (141). Once Cambridge learns English language and Christian ideologies, he feels that he has surfaced above his feral state of Africanness. Now he seeks for its authorisation by parading himself like an Englishman in front of his fellow Africans in England. It

is observed in the novel, "Armed with an enhanced mastery of this blessed English language, I went forth into London society and soon discovered myself haunted by black men occupying all ranks of life" *(CA* 142*)*. This linguistic privilege evidently distances him psychologically from his 'uncivilised' African fellow men. His use of the term 'haunting' to describe their gathering around him amply illustrates how he feels elated while underestimating his fellow Africans' positions. Nevertheless, despite of having a peculiar psychic pleasure in parading himself in front of his people, there is a fundamental sense of 'lack' that vehemently troubles him.

The contact with the world of whites creates a peculiar psychic dynamism in Cambridge. A profound passion for English language and religion create a self–alienating experience in him and it has its consequences on his identity and psyche. It affects him from two psychological dimensions; first, it compels him to perceive his black complexion as a 'lack' in comparison with 'whiteness'; second, to him his own African culture has turned into an uncivilised and unrefined part of his identity. Cambridge realises that in spite of his 'Englishness,' his dark complexion prevents him from fully actualising his 'Englishness'; for, to be English, for him, is to be 'white' as well. This weird sensation of 'inferiority' creeps into his psyche leaving him continuously conscious of his 'despicable' dark complexion. He remembers: "Truly I was now an English man, albeit a little *smudgy of complexion*! Africa spoke to me only of a history I had cast aside" *(CA* 147*;* emphasis added*)*. As Fanon argues, what the Negro "wants is a kind of lactification", by which the blackness that surrounds one's "race must be whitened" (*Black Skin* 33). Ziauddin Sardar in a Forward to Fanon's *Black Skin,*

White Mask examines what it means to be white in cultural scenario. "Whiteness [as] a symbol of purity, of *Justice, Truth, Virginity* …. defines what it means to be civilized, modern and human. …Blackness represents the diametrical opposite: in the collective unconsciousness, it stands for *ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality*" (xiii; emphasis original). In fact, this sense of inferiority generated Manichean world–view compels Cambridge to cling passionately on to various 'masks' of English culture. For him, therefore, English cultural ideals such as English language, Christian religion and marriage with English lady Anna, all become various 'masks' over his black skin. However, this masking aggravates a tension between his 'black skin' and 'white masks.' Thus, Cambridge, who emulates white man's cultural traits, is alienated from his own self while his 'white mask' fails to accomplish his desire for 'whiteness.'

Another significant aspect of Cambridge's acculturation is his denunciation of his own African culture. As a freed–negro–slave, Cambridge understands what it means to be 'English' and 'African' in England. This awareness explains the reason for his excessive interest in English cultural life: "I earnestly wished to imbibe the spirit and imitate the manners of Christian men, for already Africa spoke only to me of a barbarity I had fortunately fled" (*CA* 143). Thus, the transformation achieved through cultural assimilation subsequently compels Cambridge to be obsessed with a dogging consciousness of having an "uncivilized African demeanour" (*CA* 144) around his person. *S*uch an outlook about his culture arises in him primarily by internalising the colonial stereotypes circulated in terms of African culture. Thus, in comparison with the new accomplishments in England, Cambridge evaluates Africa as representing the degenerated and the

uncivilised. Fanon discusses this peculiar psychology of the educated Negro in the following observation:

> Every colonised people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. *(Black Skin* 9)

Cambridge understands that the English society is mobilised on the ideals that the more one renounces his 'blackness or jungle,' the more he becomes English. He is, therefore, not surprised when such a world–view is instilled in him by his religious instructor Miss Spencer. She encourages him to relinquish of his Africanness. He recollects, "It remained for her powerfully to encourage me to drive old Africa clear from my new mind for, as she related, black men were descended from Noah's son Cham…" (*CA* 144). Therefore, as a freed–slave, a return to his own African cultural circumstances becomes inconceivable for Cambridge. This is apparent when he is re–enslaved and sent to Caribbean island, where he stands vexed at the loss of his English ideals. He laments: "That I, a virtual Englishman, was to be treated as a base African cargo, caused me such hurtful pain as I was barely able to endure" *(CA 156).* For Cambridge, this is the greatest fall, the fall that he counts more pervasive than the one he felt when he was uprooted from his cultural milieu in Africa during the initial days of his

capture as slave. Cambridge, thus, fundamentally possesses a 'double–consciousness' as Gilroy discusses in *The Black Atlantic*; for, he says that striving to be both European and black entails some specific forms of double consciousness (1).

The novel *Cambridge* also discusses a peculiar psychic mechanism in the coloniser that creates intense psychological disorienting experiences for them in the colonial locations. The first part of the novel is set to demonstrate how Emily, a white European girl in the presence of Afro–Caribbean slaves, constitutes her imperial authority through a colonial polarisation of 'us' and 'them' and how she remains trapped between her ideals of humanism and English racist ideologies. Emily is an English girl sent to Caribbean island to inspect her father's plantation. Hers is a forced travel, and she personally witnesses the treatment of slaves in the plantation colony. Life in the plantation colony disillusions her convictions about humanity and finally, she stands psychologically marooned and disrupted owing to the conflicts that she experiences in her personal life. In the story, Emily undergoes almost the similar kinds of psychological distresses experienced by the Governor in the novel *Higher Ground*. Her meeting with the Afro–Caribbean slaves enables her construct a colonial 'self' through the process of 'othering.' On the contrary, her encounter in the plantation with Cambridge, the Westernised negro, baffles her by creating a cleavage in the colonial discourse and authority. Thus, while the novel analyses the psychological mechanism that supports and legitimises the colonial authority, it also shows some of the ambivalent moments of coloniser under colonialism.

Emily's arrival on the island destabilises her ideas about slavery and her notions associated with the black slaves inhabiting there. In her words, "I expressed my general concern at the blackness of the native people and was corrected on one count and instructed on the other" (*CA* 24). In the island, she finds herself bewildered as well as disgusted to see the general conditions of black slaves. Initially, one finds her sympathising with the poor conditions of Negroes and she expects, on her return to England, to intimate her father about the "increasingly common, although abstract English belief in the iniquity of slavery" (*CA* 8). In spite of such a sense of humanism in the beginning, later on she is transformed into a typical English female aristocrat. Her initial sympathies for the abolitionist cause take a smooth transition into a colonialist dislike for the Negroes as she identifies herself with the European planters. Though she expects, in the beginning, to convince her father of the "English belief in the iniquity of slavery," she is at once overcome by a colonial mentality. "…lordship over one's own person is a blessing far beyond mere food and shelter" (*CA* 8). This inversion of humanist idealism into sharp colonial attitude is indicative of her becoming one among the long lines of European colonialists. Though her position in the island does not heighten the tragedy of the slaves in a traditionally conceived oppressive structure of slavery, her gradual transformation into the camps of European slavers ideologically places her among the other European colonisers.

The presence of Afro–Caribbeans in the island is a central catalyst in imagining imperial 'self' of Emily. This is done through defining, constructing and othering those Afro–Caribbean slaves. As a young lady, brought up in the cosiness of European cultural environment, she feels that she has left behind a

'normal' 'known' world to enter into "a dark tropical unknown" (*CA* 22) with an apprehension linked to the stereotypes that she has been informed about those places of the 'Orient.' She qualifies her entrance into the island as "breaking the last remaining link with a past that I understood" (*CA* 22). As such, the entire narrative of Emily revolves around the notion of conceiving the inhabitants as the 'other.' Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain the function and purpose of creating the 'other' in postcolonial contexts. They argue,

> The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. (*Key Concepts* 169)

In Gayatri C. Spivak's conceptualisation, the process of 'othering' involves a dialectical process that combines and necessitates the presence of two groups, in which the 'Other,' represented as the coloniser, is established and authorised, simultaneously constructing the colonised 'others' as its subjects. In Emily's narrative all the three processes of 'othering,' by which she maintains colonial authority, are discernible. Emily is seen engaged in the same process of consolidating the self of Europe by a process of 'worlding.' Spivak says that in worlding, the coloniser "is actually engaged in consolidating the self of Europe by obliging the native to cathect the space of the Other on [native's] home ground" ("Rani of Sirmur" 253); that is, he is "obliging the native to experience his home ground as 'imperial space'" (*Key Concepts* 241). In *Cambridge,* the plantation

colony of Emily's father undergoes a similar "cartographic transformation" ("Rani of Sirmur" 254) as it is transformed into a space for colonial rule. Though the island comprises other people, her 'world' is inscribed and limited within her plantation colony and its inhabitants. And through her imperial presence in the plantation colony, the process of 'worlding' takes place; that is, in the colony each slave – the 'native' – is forced to see himself or herself as the 'other.' By this process of worlding, the slaves and plantation colony are defined and constructed in terms of Eurocentric ideals and designated as subject/object to European authority.

In the 'world' created by her colonial authority, Emily is acknowledged and accepted as the "misses" and "massa" (*CA* 23) by its inhabitants – the plantation slaves. Emily illustrates how she performs herself as the imperial 'self,' while the slaves exhibit their 'otherness' by showing excessive and demeaned loyalty to her typical to a colonial condition. "In order to display their pleasure at my continued sojourn among them, they thought it proper to treat me to nocturnal serenade" (*CA* 87). That is to say, their recognition of her superiority over the native inhabitants and their land is displayed by demonstrating their excessive admiration and allegiance to her. Even the territorial superiority or the "cartographic transformation" by the colonisers is maintained by the peculiar mode of colonial buildings in the island. Emily observes: "I had been led to believe that planters' residences were *imposing structures* which stood, if at all possible, in the *commanding positions* to reflect the status of the person housed within" (*CA* 26; emphasis added). By creating a world of superiors and inferiors and placing the Europeans at the center of it and ejecting the local Afro–Caribbean

slaves to the marginality, Emily and her people are 'worlding' the world or constructing the world of 'natives' into colonisers' world.

The second mode of 'othering' process that Spivak discusses is 'degrading,' through which the coloniser sustains and repeats the colonial stereotypes about the 'inferiority' of the 'Orientals' against the presumed 'superiority' of the European whites. The representation of blacks as savages, animalistic, evil, inferior and barbaric, is a colonial stereotype used by the European whites to define and construct their 'self.' Thus by maintaining the difference between the 'self' and the 'other,' the whites continue to uphold their superiority. Edward Said's concept of 'Orientalism' examines this aspect of European psychology. According to him 'Orientalism' is "the ontological and epistemological distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident'" (*Orientalism* 2). Orientalism assumed to 'know' the Orient, but inevitably through misrepresentation constructed the Orient as 'other'/inferior to European superiority in all aspects of life. He argues that by constructing knowledge, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (*Orientalism* 3).

To Emily, 'blackness' is associated with squalor and filth, and the black body brings to her mind sensations of aversion and disgust for the Afro–Caribbean slaves. As a European girl, she ostensibly depends on the stereotypical knowledge that has been informed through a Eurocentric learning. Edward Said observes that the practice of degrading people on account of their physical and moral characteristics has been one of the ways by which Europe distinguished itself as superior. He notes,

> In the writing of philosophers, historians, encyclopedists, and essayists we find character–as–designation appearing as physiological–moral classification…. Physiological and moral characteristics are distributed more or less equally: the American is 'red, choleric, erect.' the Asiatic is 'yellow, melancholy, rigid,' the African is 'black, phlegmatic, lax.'… Thus when an Oriental was referred to, it was in terms of such genetic universals as his 'primitive' state, his primary characteristics, his particular spiritual background. (*Orientalism* 119)

Emily generalises the black slaves on the basis of these physiological and moral characteristics. On her first journey to the plantation on a carriage, it occurs to her that "a number of pigs bolted into view, and after them a small parcel of monkeys" (*CA* 23). But she discovers immediately that what she has taken for monkeys is "nothing other than negro children, naked as they were born, parading in a feral manner" (*CA* 24). Benedicte Ledent notes that Emily repeatedly associates the black inhabitants of the island with the animal kingdom and classifies them as subhuman (*Caryl Phillips: Contemporary World Writers* 86). Emily describes those blacks who arrive to express their gratitude for her stay in the plantations as "congregation of black limbs tumbling and leaping" (*CA* 87). On another occasion when a black man holds her by hands to be taken back to her abode at the instruction of Mr. Brown, she cries shuddering, "…the nigger laid his black hands upon my body, at which I screamed and felt my stomach turn in revulsion, at which its contents emptied upon the ground" (*CA* 78).

Fundamentally, there lies in Emily a European colonial attitude that derides and debases everything in the non–European. Brought up in the midst of European civilisation, to Emily, every other customs and traditions of non–European become uncivilised and uncultured. She scornfully looks at black people's "ability to dress without concern for conventional morality" and to her, in such a "manner of display it is difficult to disguise one's revulsion" (*CA* 21). She also talks contemptuously about slaves' habit of talking:

> Clearly the negroes cannot be silent, for they talk indefatigably…and in all seasons. Whether joyful or grieving, they find full employment for the tongue….They talk long, loud and rapidly, but seldom deliver anything of important….Their anger is sudden and ferocious, their mirth noisy and excessive, their curiosity audacious. (*CA* 38–39).

As part of her 'othering' mechanism, Emily is also highly critical of the way the colonial language is used by her servant. She reprimands her black servant Stella for conversing in imprecise English: "I further informed her that I had no desire to hear my mother–tongue mocked by the curious thick utterance of the Negro language" (29). Thus, Emily evaluates the Afro–Caribbean culture and customs against her 'enlightened' and 'sophisticated' manners of Europe. This has been one of the tactics by which she maintained the colonial authority over the slaves.

The third is a process of 'differentiation' by which the natives are distinguished from colonisers – a process that legitimises and authorises the supremacy of the coloniser. By meeting the slaves as the 'other,' Emily

differentiates herself from the slave – the 'other,' so that her natural order, provided by her European origin, is not challenged and threatened. For instance, when her black servant Stella asks her if Emily might address her as 'Aunt Stella,' she curtly refuses to do so. She says, "…you might imagine my surprise at this request! I had no hesitation in refusing. After all, my aunts Mabel and Victoria bore no relation, physical or otherwise, to this ebony matriarch, so how could I bind them together with the same word?" (*CA* 36). While maintaining colonial difference, she also does not want that differences to be erased or terminated. She does not want this hierarchy to be tempered by any ostensible similarity of life style in the slaves. Therefore, she prefers seeing "the negroes, male and female, in their filthy native garb, for in these circumstances they do not violate laws of taste which civilized people have spent many a century to establish" (*CA* 66). For Emily, a society without rank and order is doomed and therefore, she insists that certain amount of courtesy and decorum of conduct should be expressed to retain the authority. In such a society of plantation colony where whites take some freedom in dealing with her, she cannot tolerate the same kind of treatment by the blacks.

> [The whites] converse with me as freely and as openly as they wish. This is barely tolerable amongst the whites, but when I find the blacks hereabouts behaving in the same manner I cannot abide it, and see no reason why I should accommodate myself to the lack of decorum which characterizes this local practice. (*CA* 72)

Clearly enough, Emily reiterates her authority and supremacy by differentiating and downgrading the Afro–Caribbean slaves. As Ashcroft, Griffiths

and Tiffin observe, "The self–identity of the colonizing subject, indeed the identity of imperial culture, is inextricable from the alterity of colonized others, an alterity determined, according to Spivak, by a process of othering" (*Key Concepts* 12). Through the process of 'othering,' a collective form of *'they' – the native Afro–Caribbean*, is crystallised in the plantation colony that legitimises and authorises the existence of *'us' – the European whites* as the supreme powerful. Therefore, by the processes of colonising, excluding and marginalising, Emily, the prototype of imperialist in the colonised location, defines and retains her position.

Alternatively, as long as Emily is able to sustain this position of 'otherness' of the blacks, her colonial authority moves intact. However, when she learns about Cambridge's intellectual prowess and linguistic capabilities, which goes against the conventional knowledge of the colonised people, she seems to have gone bewildered, the kind of which Bhabha describes as 'ambivalence.' Cambridge's *almost near state* of the coloniser's language and his knowledge in Christianity perplexes and instills apprehension in Emily that is peculiar to colonial 'ambivalence.' Only in a few places, Emily meets Cambridge and she is amazed by his physical strength, until that amazement slides to colonial anxiety. Emily calls him "the impressive black Hercules" (*CA* 58) and "the negro Hercules" (*CA* 62). In one instance she even calls him "*ancient* Cambridge" (*CA* 119; emphasis original), lending the negro slave a legendary stature and romantic quality. Her appreciation for Cambridge goes to the extent of asserting that "this Cambridge is lettered, can read his Bible and endeavours to teach it to his fellow blacks, which leads me to conclude that, indeed, this *ancient* Cambridge is no ordinary negro" (*CA* 119). In postcolonial conditions, such kind of acknowledgement by the

European whites opens up venues for creating colonial anxiety and ambivalence, because one notices there the signs of destabilisation and disruption of colonial discourse, colonial authority, and thereby colonialism itself. For Homi Bhabha, "…ambivalence disrupts the clear–cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizers and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer" (*Key Concepts* 13). When the European colonisers persuade the colonised to be inculcated in or 'mimic' the colonial cultural assumptions, the consequent effect is the reproduction of those European cultural traits. For Bhabha, colonial "mimicry" is an exaggerated imitation of language, culture, manners and ideas of the coloniser and it enables to construct a "partial" presence (*Location of Culture* 86) of the colonised in the realm of the coloniser. This "partial" presence or "incomplete" or "virtual" (*Location of Culture* 86) presence of the colonised ruptures the colonial discourse on which colonialism itself rests, and therefore, it distresses the coloniser.

Emily is embarrassed to see the precision with which Cambridge uses the language. She concedes to this by saying, "…he replied in highly fanciful English, that indeed *it was*" (*CA* 93; emphasis added). Later on, when a conversation is struck between Emily and Cambridge, she hesitates after some initial exchanges to continue the conversation with him. She says,

> You might imagine my surprise when he then broached the
> conversational lead and enquired after my family origins, and my
> opinions pertaining to slavery. I properly declined to share these

with him, instead counter–quizzing with enquiries as to the origins of his knowledge. (*CA* 92–93)

Essentially, Emily expresses her anxiety and ambivalence at the 'partial presence' of the negro slave Cambridge in an honest manner. She says, "I insisted that he seemed determined to adopt a lunatic precision in his dealings with our English words, as though the black imagined himself to be *a part of our white race*" (*CA* 120; emphasis added). Ironically, it is Emily who enters the realm of 'lunacy' on witnessing the partial presence of "*intelligent negro*" (*CA* 128; emphasis original) in the European cultural territory. As Evelyn O'Callaghan notes, *"*[Emily] does read the West Indian island and its inhabitants according to imperialist and racist discourse; on the other hand, her place within this discourse is clearly established as marginal" (40–41). Emily's sense of ambivalence at the slave's entry into the linguistic spectrum of the coloniser troubles her. As Bhabha notes, "The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision which is the result of … partial representation/recognition of the colonial object" (*Location of Culture* 88). Therefore, Cambridge's mimicking of European cultural traits inevitably involves "the seeds of its own destruction" (*Key Concepts* 140). Glenda Rossana Carpio in her doctoral thesis *Critical Memory in the Fictions of Slavery* argues, "On one hand, [Emily] frames [her lengthy narratives] as a deviation and aberration of the civil and rational European culture for which she, herself, is an "ambassadress" [(*CA* 4)]. On the other, she is inadvertently reveals the instability of her authority" (7).

"The Pagan Coast," the first section in the novel *Crossing the River*, demonstrates yet another aspect of colonial psychology as explicated by Octave Mannoni. Mannoni's description of a deep sense of abandonment in the colonised and a subsequent 'dependency complex' reveals some of the most intricate aspects of colonialism. The psychological condition of Nash Williams in Crossing the River could be examined within the framework of Octave Mannoni's theory of 'dependency complex.' Though Mannoni evaluates the peculiar nature of the psyche of the colonised people of Madagascar, by and large, the same parameters may be utilised in analysing the psyche of Nash Williams too. According to Mannoni, 'dependency complex' originates, "in [colonised's] efforts to escape the horrors of abandonment … [and they endeavour] to re–establish typical dependence systems capable of satisfying their deepest needs" (134). According to him, the colonising process destabilises the life of colonised and as a result, it instills a sense of abandonment that results in 'dependence' or 'reliance' on the colonisers, that is, the drive to avoid a sense of abandonment in the colonised finally takes them to find dependence on the coloniser.

Nash Williams, a freed slave is sent to Liberia under the civilising mission of American Colonization Society. In Liberia, he experiences tremendous psychological problems due to his sense of abandonment that arises from his enslavement and a resultant 'dependency complex.' Plucked away from his parents at an early age and uprooted from his African cultural environment, a deep sense of abandonment pervades his whole life. But when he is freed and is educated in Western culture under the patronage of his former slave master Edward Williams, this sense of abandonment in him subsides temporarily.

However, his sense of abandonment escalates as he is repatriated to Liberia. In Liberia, unattended by his former master and the American Colonization Society, his experience of desertion once again goes further to the extent of his psychological disorientation, and consequently, a deep sense of insecurity and uncertainty intensifies in him leading him to tremendous desire for dependency again. Fundamentally, this second–time abandonment and subsequent desire for dependency creates a neo–colonial situation around him.

The type of relationship that both Nash, the freed slave and Edward, the former slave master, have evolved is strange and unusual. Nash addresses Edward "my dear father" (*CR* 23), "dear sir" *(CR* 28*)* "beloved benefactor" *(CR* 17*)* etc, while Nash refers to himself as "humble servant and affectionate son" (*CR* 28). Octave Mannoni acknowledges that the European coloniser has cast the seeds of his own restlessness into this tranquil world, but while offering the palliatives at the same time for it, the European coloniser also "tends to give up the democratic attitude for paternalism and his faith in experience for Prospero's magic" (196). While Nash takes/is given with his second name 'Williams,' the relationship between Edward Williams and Nash Williams grows to the level of 'father and child' relationships as in Mannoni's description*;* that is, it becomes more paternal and filial. Though Nash has been granted freedom, essentially he remains to be a 'slave' and a 'captive' still, as he looks forward intensely to maintain that relationship of dependence. Moreover, in a new African environment he experiences a sense of insecurity and uncertainty, and therefore, he feels that he needs to be protected and sheltered by someone. This sense of alienation and estrangement keeps him continuously dependent again on his former master,

thereby producing his neocolonial situation. Paradoxically, 'freedom' from slavery renders Nash more dependence and reliance on Edward Williams. Colonialism or slavery has thrown Nash Williams into a psychic condition that has not prepared him for independence because "Colonial society…gives the dependent person nothing but his dependence" (Mannoni 195).

According to Octave Mannoni, the dependency behaviour arises also when the European imparts some favours to the colonised, because his favour is viewed as a license for expecting more favours from the European (42). The favours that Nash receives from Edward go against the currents of the time. The narrator observes, "Edward soon took the unusual initiative of encouraging his slaves to acquire the generally forbidden arts of reading and writing" (*CR* 13). This act of kindness by Edward to educate Nash keeps him under the imperative of asking further favours, even after his freedom is set and repatriated to Africa. The letters he writes substantiate his excessive dependence on his father – benefactor Edward. "Can you please send some valuable books, such as history, and a dictionary, and a writing paper and quills or steel pens. Also flour and pork, and other articles you may think will be of service to me, including a hoe, an axe, some trowels and some hammers" (*CR* 35). In a previous letter, he asks, "Will you be so kind as to send some mustard seed and some flax seed for stomach complaint? ... will you send me a pair spectacles for my own use and further pair for my wife sally" (*CR* 22) ? The above demands are in spite of his understanding that his land produces in abundance. He says, "I have been led to understand that this land is exceedingly rich, and will yield up everything in abundance" (*CR* 24). His lists go on in the

succeeding letters and Nash finds a psychological contentment in his dependence on Edward.

But when Nash recognises that his letters are unanswered by his former master Edward, he experiences once again a sense of abandonment which he experienced previously. Octave Mannoni notes that if the collapse of dependence merely breaks the bonds without substituting anything in their place, the man who finds himself suddenly independent in this way will be unable to guide himself. He will then fall prey to awful despair, existentialist anguish and dereliction (64). Moreover, the long silence of Edward becomes excruciating for Nash and the emphatic question that he raises is "… you must explain to me why you used me for your purposes and then expelled me to this Liberian paradise" (*CR* 62). His catastrophe arises from the disruption of a hitherto developed filial relationship and the realisation that he has been abandoned once again in a totally strange, inhospitable region, there to be forgotten and perished rather than supported in his new life in Liberia. Therefore, what he does next is to revert to his ancestral cultural life, in which he finds new relationships and new commitments. In Mannoni's paradigm, while the sense of abandonment in the colonised offers the coloniser a chance to subjugate the colonised more powerfully, in Nash's case, in the absence of any other colonial figure who can replace Edward or on whom he can depend authentically in Liberia, he returns to his original African life that gratifies his sense of insecurity.

One of the stories in Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* (1997) spins around the Shakespearean character Othello to whom Phillips provides a new voice and direction. Phillips's modification of Shakespearean Othello is an act of

subversive strategy of rewriting and contesting dominant master narratives, characteristic to postcolonial writing. In his version of Othello's story, no other prominent figures in Shakespearean play take the centre stage except Othello and Desdemona. Phillips focuses in his fiction on two fundamental aspects of Othello's life; his sense of alienation and insecurity as a black man in the white world of Venetian society and his sense of inferiority complex that stems from marrying to a white girl, Desdemona. Phillips justifies his version of story by saying that what often missed on the stage in the Shakespearean play *Othello* is the psychological anguish of Othello (*The European Tribe* 45). The attempt that he makes, therefore, in this section of his novel is to discover the essential psychological coordinates of Othello that makes him suffer in the presence of European whites and the white woman Desdemona.

Othello, the first prominent modern black European (Dawson 85) in Venice among the white Europeans, experiences tremendous psychological complexity. The fundamental problem that he encounters is his sense of alienation in the Venetian society owing to his racial consciousness as a 'black man in the white society.' For Frantz Fanon, this deep–seated awareness of the black man about his 'blackness' in the white man's world crushes his personhood. As he notes, "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person consciousness" (*Black Skin* 83). The fact of being a 'black man' renders Othello a sense of disorientation in Venetian society. Therefore, in order to overcome his sense of disorienting alienation, Othello struggles hard to achieve acceptance and recognition in Europeans' world of racial discrimination. This

desire and longing to be accepted makes him an obsessive neurotic. "As a man of color in a white–dominated society, he is consequently prone to a brand of self–doubt founded in what Fanon terms 'affiliation neuroses'" (Burton 57). While discussing Negro's desire for recognition, Fanon observes, "They want to be recognized in their quest for manhood. They want to make an appearance. Each one of them is an isolated, sterile, salient atom with sharply defined rights of passage, each one of them *is*. Each one of them wants to *be*, to *emerge*" (*Black Skin* 165; emphasis original). Yet, Othello finds around him the 'white gazes' that diminish his being, for he says, "Among the venetians, all was confusion as I attempted to distinguish those who beheld my person with scorn and contempt, from those who simply looked upon me with the curiosity that one would associate with a child" (*NB* 118). As an army General in Venice, rather than spending his time on strategic deliberations and preparations about war, he spends time on desperately struggling to determine the meaning of the black identity in the 'white civilisation.' Although Othello feels that his position as an army General in Venetian society has been achieved with a personal dignity and distinction, his sense of being "sealed into a crushing objecthood" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 82) in the white man's civilisation makes his sense of alienation more emphatic. Othello recognises his problem 'to be black among the whites' as in Fanon's observation; for, Fanon views that a black, in his racial consciousness, must 'not only be a black man,' but "he must be black in relation to the white man" (*Black Skin* 82–83).

However, while Phillips's Othello achieves his position in Venetian army, he is also constantly conscious of his sense of inferiority and marginalisation

within Venetian society owing to his 'blackness.' In a much impressive personal estimation, he makes clear that he is a man who "had moved from the edge of the world to the centre ….a man born of royal blood, a mighty warrior, yet a man who, at one time, [was] a poor slave, had been summoned to serve this state; to lead the Venetian army; to stand at the very centre of the empire" (*NB* 107). In fact, those must be moments of accomplishment for Othello, yet those moments of his rising from the 'edge' to the 'center,' are now betrayed by his dormant sense of inferiority and anxiety because of his awareness of his 'blackness' in white man's world. Othello's presence in Venice is required and appreciated by the Venetians not as one of citizens of Venice, but only in terms of his requirement as a mercenary. He forgets this fact while in the Venetian society, and from his inability to recognise it originates his tragedy. Phillips examines this position when he remarks, "he fought his way up from slavery and into the mainstream of the European nightmare. His attempts to secure himself worked, but only as long as there was war and he was needed" (*The European Tribe* 51). Thus, the problem with Othello, as Stef Craps observes, is that he underestimates the forces of nationalism and racism militating against his dream of being accepted into Venetian society (194).

Othello's excessive consciousness of the 'white gazes' on his black body renders his particular psychological state of 'inferiority complex,' which constantly compels him to overcome it by adopting certain psychological defense mechanisms. Therefore, in an attempt to steal attention from the Venetian society and as part of his desire for a 'positive' gaze, Othello dresses himself in a fashionable way. He reflects, "…I wondered if my new costume might convince

some among these venetians to look upon me with a kinder eye. It was this desire to be accepted that was knotting my stomach and depriving me of sleep…" (*NB* 122). Paradoxically, Othello is placed on two polarities. On the one side, the Venetian society has acknowledged his capability as a professional soldier by investing their trust in him, but on the other, he has been marginalised owing to his blackness. Finding himself between these two contradictions, Othello, however, attempts to sneak into the society, which is his demand for the situation, by marrying Desdemona whatever be the consequences. He comments: "I resolved to make the senator's daughter my bride, whatever the consequences" (*NB* 138). She is the ultimate symbol of his assimilation, and, of course, the undependable woman who, he fears will illustrate the illusory nature of that assimilation (Dawson 95). Therefore, Othello's passion for Desdemona may be seen as a way of compensating his sense of isolation and inferiority in Venetian society, that is to say, he makes Desdemona as an instrument to reach the goal of his social recognition and acceptability.

In his 'black self,' Othello is caught between a number of contradictory positions and ambivalences. Though he attempts to assimilate himself into the aristocratic European community by marrying Desdemona, he is not unaware of the significance of such a union, its advantages and its disadvantages. He reflects: "And now to be married, and to the heart of the society" (*NB* 144). But later on he recognises the dangers involved in it. He says, "I now possess an object of *beauty and danger*, and I know that, henceforth, all men will look upon me with a combination of *respect and scorn*" (*NB* 148; emphasis added). He is confounded by the Venetian law that necessitates the Venetian bloodlines to be kept pure. He

fears that their union will result in the breach of this social rule and it is likely to bring upon him the condemnation from the world of Venetians, to whom he is desperately trying to gain access. He recognises that "…the aristocratic Venetian marriage was a carefully controlled economic and political ritual, and it was therefore important to keep the bloodlines pure" (*NB* 112). Therefore, the breach of bloodlines implied a breach of 'economic and political' traditions, which will finally close down all his chances of entering the society, the ultimate goal of marriage itself.

A deep sense of alienation and lack of confidence take him through numerous distressing psychological states. Ledent notes that Othello's 'predicament' is triggered off not only by the pragmatism of the Republic of Venice and the covert racism of its inhabitants, but also by his own inability to perceive the precariousness of his own position ("Fictional and Cultural Labyrinth" 188). Against the backdrop of his lack of social acceptability and also of his own scepticism about its possibilities, he starts even 'coldly' suspecting Desdemona's personal integrity and her loyalties to him. The suspicion about Desdemona that arises in him apparently contradicts his flawless love for her. Though he claims, "In her chastity, loyalty and honour, she is the most un–Venetian of women," in the same vein he manifests his weakness as well by suspecting her: "… yet is there some sport to this lady's actions? I am familiar with the renowned deceit of the Venetian courtesan, yet I have taken a Venetian for a wife" (*NB* 106). The repetitive articulation of 'yet' is symptomatic of his state of ambivalence in marrying a Venetian woman, through whom he hopes to enter the world of 'whiteness.' While he is skeptical about his social acceptance

owing to his blackness, he is not without a sustaining anxiety about "his smoky hand on her marble skin" after his marriage with her (*NB* 146). It is another kind of sensation that he encounters, that is, he suspects about the success of his married life and the consequent question of acceptability into the Venetian society.

Finally, when Othello marries Desdemona, his tragedy begins. His conscience repudiates him for such an act. It tells him, "My friend, the Yoruba have a saying: the river that does not know its own source will dry up" (*NB* 181). This disquieting voice of his conscience continues to remind him of his negligence in forgetting his history, his identity and culture. "My friend, an African river bears no resemblance to a Venetian canal. Only the strongest spirit can hold both together. Only the most powerful heart can endure the pulse of two such disparate life–forces" (*NB* 183). One finds that Othello gradually loses his sense of self and identity in order to enter the Venetian society; he had lost his former wife and child across the sea as well as his African religion, and he has now turned back to his race by marrying a white girl. Phillips, mentions in *The European Tribe* that Othello has married into the society, the commonest form of acceptance, but precisely at this moment of triumph, Othello begins to forget that he is black (48).

Caryl Phillips's *Dancing in the Dark* (2005) presents the emotional and psychological conflicts of African–American historical figure, Bert Williams (1875 – 1922), who chooses to put on burnt–cork–face and play the role of 'coon' to delight the American white audiences. Bert Williams immigrated at an age of eleven from Bahamas to America and settled with his parents in San Francisco. Phillips's fictional work is not an account of the life of Bert Williams, but rather a re–imagining of his inner–self that does not find enough space in the narratives on

this historical figure. Phillips says: "It left a sort of gaping hole in the life where a novelist could imagine those quite, interior moments that perhaps might cause a problem for a biographer but create a challenge for novelist" (Kransy 151–52). In the fictional work of Phillips, Bert Williams is depicted as one undergoing excessive psychological distress as "race complicates and problematizes some of the most intimate aspects of his life" (MacLeod, "*Dancing in the Dark*: Caryl Phillips in Conversation with John McLeod" 146). Essentially, the basis for wearing the blackface is founded in his philosophy of art and life. Brian Seibert quotes Bert Williams' own view in his review of the novel: "The man with the real sense of humor is the man who can put himself in the spectator's place and laugh at his own misfortune [and] it was not until I was able to see myself as another person that my sense of humor developed" (21). In order to achieve his artistic achievement, blackface was essential element for Bert Williams. However, his philosophy and life put him under contradictions, in which he stands vexed between the demands of his race and white man's expectations.

As the 1890s was an era of increased racial violence, constitutionally upheld segregation laws and contempt of Africans as 'primitive' and 'savage,' participation in public life and theatre, for the artists especially, required a careful monitoring and appeasing of white audiences. Therefore, the artists most often conformed to white expectation by using the conventions of the newly popular vaudeville stage—including blackface makeup—in their productions (Sotiropoulos 1–2). Williams quickly learns, however, that it is almost impossible to challenge the accepted bond that exists between the Negro performer and his white audience. Therefore, he finds no way out of this impasse. He reflects:

> Is the colored performer to be forever condemned to pleasing a
> white audience with farce, and then attempting to conquer these
> same people with music and dance? Is the colored American
> performer to be nothing more than an exuberant childish fool …?
> Can the colored American ever be free to entertain beyond the
> evidence of his dark skin? Can the colored man be himself in
> twentieth–century America? (*DD* 100)

However, Williams tries to convince himself hard that his white audiences understand that the 'creature' who plays on the stage is not Williams, but rather somebody behind his person. But, looking at the mirror each time gives him a numb in the soul "for this was not a man that he recognized" (*DD* 58). He tries to believe persuasively that the impersonation, in no way has an effect on his identity. "No longer Egbert Austin Williams. He kept telling himself, I am no longer Egbert Austin Williams. As I apply the burnt cork to my face, as I smear the black into my already sable skin, as I put on my lips, I am leaving behind Egbert Austin Williams" (*DD* 57).

Taken the theatrical performances of Bert Williams within the context of postcolonial conditions where white supremacy is reiterated in the racist politics, his sense of being 'othered' is felt excruciatingly with regard to the bodily differences. In the performances he conducts, his black body itself becomes a stage, where the colonial stereotypes and discourses perform the roles assigned to black man for the sake of white audiences. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue,

> … this is the inescapable 'fact' of blackness, a 'fact' which forces
> on 'negro' people a heightened level of bodily self–
> consciousness…. the 'fact' of the body ... [stands] metonymically
> for all the 'visible' signs of difference, and their varied forms of
> cultural and social inscription, forms often either undervalued,
> overdetermined or even totally invisible to the dominant colonial
> discourse. (*Post–colonial Reader* 321)

Bert's situation in a white world is founded on a dialectical relationship in which he is brought into an awareness of his identity in relation to white audiences. The white gazes leave him disturbed, for he simultaneously positions himself within the points of references assigned to him, while attempting to constitute his identity. Fanon describes this situation as one of crushing objecthood. He argues, "A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like *a black man* – or at least like *a nigger*. I shouted a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged" (*Black Skin* 86; emphasis added). Bert Williams' position conforms to what Fanon examines in terms of obliging the stereotypes for the blacks.

Bert Williams recognises agonisingly the white man's demands for colonial stereotypes to be repeated on the stage and the associated 'traumatising gazes' of the whites on his body. The roles that he plays puts him in paradoxical positions, because his sense of commitment to art pushes him to play the role of a 'coon,' but on the other hand, his playing such a role essentially cements him with the colonial discourses that it distorts his identity. His philosophy rests on what Fanon has observed later on: "Since the other hesitated to recognise me, there

remained only one solution: to make myself known" (*Black Skin, White Masks*
87). At the early stages of their performances in the city's saloons and variety
halls, Bert Williams and his companion, George Walker, suffer from a sense of
estrangement and depersonalisation as "they learn to obliterate their true selves on
a daily basis" (*DD* 29). Nevertheless, their success in theatrical performance, "In
Dahomey" becomes exciting that they view it as a contributive factor to the
growth of their race itself. But slowly Williams becomes conscious of the
incongruity of wearing the blackface and becoming 'somebody else' in the
"shuffling, dull–witted, clumsy, watermelon–eating Negro of questionable
intelligence" (*DD* 35) in order to satiate a specifically American fantasy of
blackness.

Obviously, the mood of the times contributes to it a lot. Colonial
stereotypes play a significant part in the life of Bert Williams. The real problem
for Williams is that he is trapped between the white audiences' expectations in
which they feel comfortable by watching a "powerless man playing an even more
powerless thing" (*DD* 121). Essentially, as one would notice, "Between his needs
and his audience's expectations he walks a tightrope …" (*DD* 191). In fact,
stereotypes associated with blacks for centuries become a 'veil' in the case of Bert
Williams. As W. E. B. Du Bois observes, "Negro is … born with a veil, and gifted
with second–sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true
self–consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the
other world" (8). For Bert Williams, the concept of 'veil' fundamentally matches
in three respects. First, it informs the 'blackness' of Williams that differentiates
him from the white Americans. Second, the veil connotes the 'stereotypes,'

through which the white American looks at Williams. Third, it suggests Williams' own inability to perceive him and his identity beyond the stereotypical gaze of the white society. This 'veil' obviously obstructs White America's and Bert's own ability to see his true identity as an African–American.

Finally, his decision to mask his face brings shame and disgrace to his own people. A lot of criticism that fell on Bert Williams was that he was not prepared to be a representative of the race and he acted very much as though he was above it (Kransy 154). The young coloured men who visit him inform him, "We exist in *their* imagination as you portray us, and you reinforce their low judgment of us as dull and pitiable. ….I would have you perform [one that is] closer to that of the new, twentieth–century Negro, as opposed to a low type who is a deliberate travesty of our race" (*DD* 179–80; emphasis original). Williams suffers from a sense of a double consciousness, which Du Bois notices in the African–Americans in general, that always enables them to look at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (Du Bois 8). According to Du Bois this produces a "two–ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" (8). Though these two perspectives are not reconciled with one another, the African American struggle to be both "Negro and... American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (9). Phillips is cited saying that "that dilemma, that idea of having a career which was largely dependent upon white America's patronage, but at same time not wanting to be alienated from the black community…did cause him a tremendous amount of pain

and tremendous amount of inner–torment" (Kransy 154–55). Williams' case is that neither he wants to see himself isolated from his people nor does he want to stop being recognised by the white audience.

What is crucial about the hegemonic relationship between the colonised and the coloniser, blacks and whites, slaves and slavers is the subtle way in which the psychological coordinates operate and determine the nature of their (post)colonial relationship. The hegemonic discourses of the coloniser provides him with the ability to influence the consciousness of the colonised in the most persistent and powerful colonial operation in colonial conditions. Accordingly, while the colonised/blacks/slaves undergo constant repressive experiences at the hands of coloniser, the study conducted in this chapter also reveals how particular psychological positions adopted by the colonised themselves initiate and perpetuate colonial situations. The study also presents the colonisers' psychological complexities as arising mainly due to some inherent contradictions in colonial discourses, and the subsequent experiences of ambivalence and fear of the disruption of colonial authority. Thus, while the colonial binaries remain in a hegemonic relationship in the colonial conditions, their psychic dynamics and experiences provide them with ample spaces for psychological disorientation and disruption in their lives.

One of the central issues that Phillips contemplates in his fiction is the consequences of colonial intervention in the history of humanity in producing various kinds of displacements. The experience of 'displacement' is one of the most traumatic experiences in human history in relation to colonialism, enslavement and its aftermaths. Postcolonial representations of displacement and

search for a 'home,' or 'belonging' are interrelated concerns that no single issue can be examined at the expense of the other. When territorial displacement destabilises people from every aspect of their lives including culture, history and relationships, they seek for an alternative strategy of finding a 'home' or a 'place' to belong to. Next chapter seeks to document the anguish and predicament of the displaced postcolonial subject while unveiling their worries and anxieties in coming to terms with the issues of 'home.'