

Chapter V
Racism, Xenophobia and Tribalism:
Constructing the Postcolonial Other in Caryl Phillips's Fiction

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The history of humanity has witnessed a great number of exiles and migrations to the imperial centres like America and England, particularly, owing to their overwhelming roles in generating colonial displacements, and also for the reasons of economic opportunities in these regions. Through such migratory practices, boundaries of nationhood, race and cultures are redrawn and redefined by transmuting them into multicultural spaces. Nevertheless, ideals of official nationalism and ethnic prioritisation in the public domains of these destination countries often become huge impediments for the migrants in participating and achieving cultural solidarity. Under such grave conditions, an obsession with 'race' and 'ethnicity,' the foundational categories of 'nationhood,' is viewed to be undermining the possibilities of a sympathetic climate for the migrant. Despite having a sense of displacement already, an increasing amount of antagonism and racial and ethnic intolerances, both officially and in public discourses, in the imperial locations re-construct the position of the migrants and refugees variously as 'outsider,' 'foreigner' and 'stranger.' Caryl Phillips's fiction is deeply concerned with such lives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in a world of xenophobia, European/American tribalism and racial vilification. He examines how such practices of differentiation, exclusion or preference founded on race, colour, national or ethnic origin function to nullify or impair the fundamental human rights of these people in the political, social, cultural, and psychological or any other aspect of life. The present chapter is an exploration into such

experiences of migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, and it evaluates how these experiences produce immense psychological vexations and disorienting moments to these categories of people, who are often identified as the ‘other.’

According to Elleke Boehmer the process of othering depends on two indivisible mechanisms of differentiation and downgrading of the vulnerable thereby validating the supremacy of the dominant (81). Racism and ethnocentrism in America and England fundamentally construct a hierarchy of social order that lends privilege to the supremacy of whites; it postulates a system of both inclusion and exclusion of individuals by categorising them into ‘those who can belong’ and ‘those who cannot.’ Essentialising the supremacy of whiteness or Europeanness or Americanism is viewed as a way of distancing the non-whites or the non-European or the non-American as the ‘other’ and of shedding of the responsibility to practically recognise and engage with their diversity and with the commonalities. As David Sibley points out, “Portrayals of minorities as defiling and threatening have for long been used to order society internally and to demarcate the boundaries of society, beyond which lie those who do not belong” (49). If racism is viewed as an othering practice from a purely biological difference of black and white colour distinctions, a peculiar strategy of discriminating and othering the people on the basis of their ethnic or cultural aspects gain more significance in the contemporary world, along with another peculiar discriminatory aspect of ‘tribalism’. However, while these ‘othering’ practices of racism, ethnocentrism and European/American tribalism are directed against the groups that fall outside the limits of nation, race and culture, it is

mainly perceived to be originating out of ‘xenophobia,’ a fear for the foreigners and outsiders.

Phillips’s fiction examines not only the predicaments of the African and the Caribbean in the racialised spaces of America and Britain, but also of the Jews and the Asians who experience similar exclusionary practices especially in racialised spaces of Britain. His fiction, thus, opens before the reader a vast panorama of racial terror and its psychological consequences. By juxtaposing the intertwining experiences of the blacks, the Jews and the Asians, Phillips creates a remarkable representation of individuals weighed down by the forces of history. “The Cargo Rap,” in *Higher Ground* describes the story of an African American named Rudy Williams “who is being stretched and tortured for forty dollars” (*HG* 163) in the Max Row high security prison in America. Rudy’s prison life is significant in clarifying the nexus between institutionalised racism and criminalisation in America in the 1960s. It essentially points to the psychological impacts of racially–biased penal and judicial systems in the lives of the African–Americans. Rudy is sentenced to solitary confinement for an alleged attempt of stealing forty dollars.

The alleged crime: At the age of nineteen manchild years I am supposed to have asked a white man, at the point of a .38, to pay some overdue wages. I did not harm a gray hair on his gray body. I swear to God (a God) the man wasn’t even scared. Probably thought that I was after candy. A posse of Feds blew in and for the reasons I still don’t follow decided to take me alive. They strapped my wrists and ankles to a pole and carried me off to their judicial feast.

Punishment: One to life in a concentration camp of their own choice. ‘The nigger was armed and extremely dangerous. Break him.’ (HG 91–92; emphasis original)

Rudy’s imprisonment, apparently, is not for any politically motivated act. In the words of Charles P. Sarvan, Rudy’s crime was “to persuade a shop–keeper to pay back a small portion of the collective historical debt owed by American whites to their black country–men dating from the slave trade onward” (518). He believes that he and his African fellowmen have been mistreated for centuries by the whites through enslavements and in rendering subsequent displacements in manifold aspects of their life. Therefore, he finds it reasonable for the demand of the “overdue wages” (HG 91) due to him and to his folks from the whites. It is this profound historical consciousness of being exploited that compels him to persuade the white shopkeeper for forty dollars. While in the solitary confinement, Rudy undergoes some of the harshest experiences of racial injustice and persecutory methods. His position as a black–American problematises his life in the American prison. In a letter to his father, he describes his conditions in the prison this way:

I am a captive in a *primitive* capitalist state. I live on Max Row in a high–security barracoon. Forty five percent of my fellow captives are of the same colour as the captors. Fifty–five percent of us—*the wretched* of the earth—are Africans. We live on the *bottom* level of this social swill bucket” (HG 66; emphasis added).

Rudy's letter reveals how a black man struggles to survive, while a system that is biased determines to crush him to the bottom. As Benedicte Ledent comments, "The Cargo Rap" shows how a convict can be gradually broken by a system bent on destroying the man in man" (*Caryl Phillips: Contemporary World Writers* 65).

Rudy's dehumanising persecution and harassment owing to his blackness is coupled with whites' unfair penal and judicial system. The prison in itself is a 'postcolonial' location where detention is a kind of displacement and exile. Rudy is sarcastic in mentioning about one's release from the prison. He observes, "The only way out of here for the black man is on his knees with the tongue scooping and looping along the floor. Some go out in the boxes and directly to the morgue. Nobody walks out upright and tall like man. It is against the rules. Deemed improper behaviour" (*HG* 70). A study conducted by scholars reveals the shocking details of racial prejudice and discrimination perpetuated in American legal systems against minorities, especially the blacks. The researchers observe that often race plays discriminatory role in media portrayals of crime as well as in the legal system. If the perpetrator is black, sentences are harsher than when the perpetrator is white (Green et al. 436). Rudy's radicalism and revolutionary thinking in "Cargo Rap" appear to be the effects of his deep conviction that no justice would be given to the racially segregated blacks in America.

Brutalised by his guards and isolated from his fellow inmates, Rudy undergoes racial intolerance in the prison. Often, the incarceration becomes an instrument of organised violence for the suppression of the minority by the majority. America has been notoriously involving in such oppressive measures as early as 1960s. W.E.B. Du Bois, in his classical work *The Souls of Black Folk*

discusses at length about the status of the Negro in the South in the 1960s. He observes,

Its police system was arranged to deal with blacks alone, and tacitly assumed that every white man was *ipso facto* a member of that police. Thus grew up a double system of justice, which erred on the white side by undue leniency and the practical immunity of red-handed criminals, and erred on the black side by undue severity, injustice, and lack of discrimination.... It was not then a question of crime, but rather one of color, that settled a man's conviction on almost any charge. Thus Negroes came to look upon courts as instruments of injustice and oppression, and upon those convicted in them as martyrs and victims. (120–21)

America and its institutional machineries isolate Rudy, building up his psychological disruption gradually. For Rudy, the prison becomes the images of torture and a world specific within the racist world: "Max Row is isolation. The deepest hell" (*HG* 84). Du Bois also finds another social dimension in the unjust imprisonment of the Negroes in America. "the black folks say that only colored boys are sent to jail, and they not because they are guilty, but because the State needs criminals to eke out its income by their forced labor" (87). After the emancipation proclamation and the abolition of slavery in America, the issue of human labor was becoming problematic in the American society. Therefore, when the Negroes were freed and the whole South was convinced of the impossibility of free Negro labor, the first and almost universal device was to use the courts as a means of re-enslaving the blacks. It was not then a question of crime, but rather

one of color, that settled a man's conviction on almost any charge (Du Bois 121). Rudy's incarceration becomes more poignant at the backdrop of such social and penal systems in America.

Though for a 'stupid' crime, he has been treated brutally and such treatment exposes the racial hatred and antipathy common in practice in the 1960s. As Du Bois observes, "It was not then a question of crime, but rather one of color, that settled a man's conviction on almost any charge" (121). The prolonged prison life oozes out Rudy's emotional responsiveness and he resigns passively to his fate saying, "I will recognize it as part of the price I pay for being born a slave in America" (*HG* 71). For Rudy, the judicial and penal systems are the ideological and institutional structures that constitute his subject position. After spending years in the prison, he equates his own life with that of "concentration camp" (*HG* 127). His subconscious mind works in such a way that he repeatedly employs terminologies associated with the Jewish Holocaust in his letters to depict his own experiences of incarceration. For instance, the incarceration is equated to "Belsen" (*HG* 69), which is one of the Nazi concentration camps; the prison guards are referred to as the "Gestapo Police" (*HG* 127), which was the official secret police of Nazi Germany. As Benedicte Ledent notes,

Alternating between Max Row, that is the maximum security-wing of the prison, 'a zoo within a zoo' (*HG* 146), and the general section where he may apply for parole, Rudy is involved in a judicial game of cat and mouse with the white administration, which ends up with Rudy on Max Row, his back to the wall and desperately realizing

....‘the magnitude of [his] decline and fall’ (*HG* 162). (*Caryl Phillips: Contemporary World Writers* 65)

Through the story of Rudy Williams, Phillips draws attention to the various ways in which anti-sentiments towards the black-Americans pervaded in America’s cultural, legal and political spaces in the twentieth century. While Phillips depicts this particular character of Europeans in terms of ‘European tribalism’ in his work *The European Tribe* (1987), he fetches yet another similar terminology ‘American tribalism’ to characterise American sentiments that occlude the presence of non-Americans in its spatiality. In “American Tribalism,” one of the essays in *Color Me English* (2011), Phillips describes his mounting disenchantment with America’s self-mythologising ideals of equality in all aspects of life irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. He notes, “race and ethnicity have become essentialist boxes into which people have begun to locate themselves ...” (32). This essay depicts how America has been screening its multiracial and multicultural community for ages through the lenses of race, religion and ethnicity. Rudy’s predicament in American legal system surfaces from within this tribal character of America that denies access to people from other ethnicities and nationalities.

A Distant Shore presents contemporary England as a locale for refuge and asylum, and many of the characters who crisscross the landscape of England expect it to be their ‘home.’ Bright who travels with Gabriel to England declares, “I am an Englishman. Only the white man respects us, for we do not respect ourselves. If you cut my heart open you will find it stamped with the word ‘England.’ I speak the language, therefore I am going to England to claim my

house and my stipend” (*DS* 119). Said, an Iraqi with whom Gabriel/Solomon shares the prison cell asserts, “in England freedom is everything. They can change the law, but you cannot change the culture” (*DS* 70). Mahmood an Indian, who escapes from the Panjabi village in India for personal reasons, imagines becoming successful in England. The narrator observes, “... there would be no problem finding a well–paid job of some description in Mrs. Thatcher’s country.... Mahmood dreamed of one day returning to his village in triumph as the most important man in the region ...” (*DS* 179). Paradoxically, life in England proves otherwise for all of these people.

England, with its heterogeneous and polycultural character, catches attention for the large scale influx of migrants into its territories. A great part of the migrations to England has occurred as a result of England’s colonial policies and conquests. Over the period, people from erstwhile colonies began to move to this part of the world under the conclusion that England had a definite role in creating their postcolonial situations. Paul Gilroy argues, “The immigrant is now here because Britain, Europe, was once out there; that basic fact of global history is not usually deniable” (*Postcolonial Melancholia* 100). But, to the great dismay of the immigrants, England’s racial and ethnic prejudices create the spaces of England into one of unpleasant locations, where multicultural ideals evaporate. Gilroy shares the concern and the anxiety of an age that tries to exclude people from its multicultural spaces.

Today, any open stance toward otherness appears old–fashioned, new–agey, and quaintly ethnocentric. We have been made acutely aware the limitations placed upon the twentieth century’s

cosmopolitan hopes by the inability to conceptualize multicultural and postcolonial relations as anything other than risk and jeopardy.

(Postcolonial Melancholia 4)

Many of the migrants and refugees in *A Distant Shore* are essentially trapped in the colonial myth of England as their ‘Mother country,’ where they would be received without difficulties. The stories of Said and Mahmood speak about an unfortunate and early termination of their dreams and hopes. Said an Iraqi, once an English teacher in his country, travels “in a small space under a truck ... like an animal, but worse than animal” (*DS* 69) to England to make a living to support his family in Iraq. Though he expresses intense despair at the spread of ‘Islamophobia’ around the world, he also hopes that England would give him the freedom that he desires: “Everybody wants to keep out the Muslims, but in England freedom is everything” (*DS* 70). When Said says “everybody wants to keep out Muslims,” he refers to a mysterious sort of ‘terror’ in the minds of the West against the Muslims as the perpetrators of terrorism. Andrew Shryock observes that this fear of Muslims and Islam began intensely with the 9/11 attacks and it would end when ‘terror’ is defeated. He finds that though the link between terrorism and Islam had long been rooted in the minds of Europe long before September 11, 2001, it has grown stronger in recent years suspecting the Muslims as high-profile enemies. The result is a pervasive “Islamophobia,” a generalised fear of Islam and Muslims (1). Caryl Phillips by portraying Said, attempts to present a general state of apprehension in the minds of Muslims in the aftermath of attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2000. In his introduction to the collection of essays *Color Me English* Phillips reflects on the complexities of

West's relationship with Islam. He evaluates the disparaging attitude of the West against the immigrants, especially the Arabs and the Muslims at the backdrop of post-9/11 racial politics, "... most of the discourse is just plain, simple, old-fashioned malevolence towards the outsider, the person who not only looks different, but dresses differently, or who worships in a place other than a church" (8). The conspiracy hatched by terrorists in the 9/11 attacks has been generalised to include all the Muslims as terrorists, and consequently there has been strong cynicism and suspicion directed against the Muslims in the West. The implications of this have become so predictable that it is used to produce the stereotype that all the Muslims are violent extremists.

Said's situation in the novel remains doubly problematic as he represents the predicament of Muslims against the backdrop of Islamophobia and the aftermath of American occupation of Iraq in 1991. His travel to England is for securing a life better than the one in his country. But he is victimised on account of an allegation of stealing. While travelling in the train, a couple entrusts him with their bag to go to a restaurant, but on coming back the lady screams that her money has been stolen by Said. He is handed over to the police custody and is imprisoned. But he stands unable to comprehend the incident. "...why would I come all the way from my country to make a new life here and then take their money? I cannot go back. I sold my land and animals to pay for my journey. I have nothing to go back to. My wife and family are ...waiting for me to send money so they can come to England" (*DS* 70). No trial takes place, and is not yet challenged his innocence; but he is subjected to both physical and mental torture in the detention centre.

Institutionalised racism is very apparent in the treatment that Said receives in the cell. Though Gabriel, Said's cellmate, calls the warder's attention to Said's illness, the warder does not show any interest in leaving his television and come to him. Finally, on his convenience, "The night warder leaves his precious television set" and comes saying, "I'll call the doctor, but they do everything in their own sweet time" (*DS* 72). The negligence and disinterestedness expressed by the European warder arise from his viewing the prisoner as a 'foreigner'/'outsider' who needs no attention. Though Said has come to England with great expectations, eventually he suffers various predicaments in England. In his words "I am cold, but I have no money to see a doctor. And now may be I will never see England again. But have you noticed? The light in England is very weak. It depresses me. They have taken the sun out of the sky" (*DS* 71). Due to the shortage of ambulances, the body of Said is left in the cell with Gabriel who finds it traumatising to spend the night locked up in a cell with a corpse. Said's sad death in the cell is a case of sheer lack of concern for human life, which stems from inhuman aspects of racial prejudices against the immigrant. The confidence Said expresses in the benevolence of England remains paradoxical through his animal-like death in the cell. His cruel death exposes the prevalence of a tribal character of England that discourages participation and communion with the 'outsiders.'

Another story of migrant in *A Distant Shore* revolves around Mahmood, an Indian. Having failed an early marriage, Mahmood leaves for England and joins his brother in Leicester where he owns three restaurants. After having worked for ten years in all the three kitchens of his brother's restaurants, he is given the sole

charge of the restaurant, 'The Khyber Pass.' He expects to save some money to begin a new business, but he encounters racial abuses and offenses, and "could no longer stomach the disrespectful confusion of running a restaurant" (*DS* 179) in England. He often feels insulted at the impolite behaviour of the white customers in the restaurant and it becomes a routine affair that he no longer is able to get on well with situation. The narrator observes,

The sight of fat-bellied Englishmen and their slatterns rolling into The Khyber Pass after the pubs had closed, calling him Ranjit or Baboo or Swamp Boy, and using poppadoms as Frisbees, and demanding lager, and vomiting in his sinks, and threatening him with his own knives and their beery breath, and bellowing for mini-cabs and food that they were too drunk to see had already arrived on the table in front of them, was causing Mahmood to turn prematurely grey. (*DS* 179–80)

Mahmood's story in England illustrates the situation that a foreigner encounters in the normal work place. The disrespect and abuse that are shown towards the 'outsiders' are part of reiterating a continuing legacy of stereotypes against the Orientals. Mike, an Irish immigrant in England, while telling Solomon the reasons for the prevalence of racial hatred, even goes to the extent of accusing the Indians of the source of trouble for the immigrant's wretchedness in England.

I'm an old traditionalist, Solomon. I want fish and chips, not curry and chips. I'm not prejudiced, but we'll soon be living in a foreign country unless somebody puts an end to all this immigration. These

Indians, they still make their women trail after them, and they have their mosques and temples, and their butcher shops where they kill animals in the basement and do whatever they do with the blood. I mean, they're peasants . . . It's these kinds of people that cause others to have bad attitudes and to do things like they've done to Mum's wall. I'm not saying they're right, because they're not. (*DS* 258)

Ostensibly, Mike, a racist himself, invites attention to how the Indians are viewed through the prism of racial and ethnic stereotypes. As a result of racial abuse and white man's disrespect, Mahmood is forced to keep changing the locations and occupations to realise his dreams. He is finally forced to discard his business with the restaurant, and moves to another small town and makes a living by running a shop for newspapers. But, even there, he is soon to discover that the situation is not any better:

I have been thinking that I should take my chance and drive a mini-cab rather than suffer all this newsagent business by myself. In fact, this England is crazy. I go in the streets and after all these years in this country they tell me, 'Your mother fucks dogs.' Why does my mother fuck dogs? They do not know my mother. In my home there is problems. Out on the street there is problems. (*DS* 228)

Mahmood's position as an immigrant is complicated as he can neither belong to the new location of England, where he is disrespected, nor return to his native place without fulfilling what he had expected. Hence, the life of newly emigrating

individuals from Britain's colonies often becomes "stark witness to the subaltern lives" (McLeod, *Postcolonial London* 4). Mahmood does not suffer from physical attacks on account of his different ethnicity, but he suffers psychologically from a lack of respect from the whites as an outsider in England.

There are two significant reasons that Paul Gilroy presents for the prevalence of racist behaviour in England/Britain. The first, the presence of immigrants from the erstwhile colonies become moments of recognition of Britain's awful responsibility in bringing about their present situation. Gilroy notes,

[The immigrant] comes to represent all the discomfiting ambiguities of the empire's painful and shameful ... history. The immigrant is now here because Britain, Europe, was once out there ... And yet its grudging recognition provides a stimulus for forms of hostility rooted in the associated realization that today's unwanted settlers carry all the ambivalence of empire with them. (*Postcolonial Melancholia* 100)

It is this inability to shoulder the responsibility and the awful suffering generated from a guilty-conscience that compel the British to behave insolently to the immigrants. Second reason that Gilroy finds is the "familiarity" of the immigrants in the British society. The immigrants' "partially familiar" presence makes it impossible to "to locate the Other's difference in the commonsense lexicon of alterity" (*Postcolonial Melancholia* 125). While societies across the world are becoming multicultural, the ambiguity in defining the 'nation' in terms of

differentiating the 'other' becomes more difficult. The instances of Said, Mahmood and Solomon becoming the victims of racial prejudice in England explain these difficulties that Britain confronts.

Although Gabriel/Solomon (Gabriel changes his name to Solomon in England only after his release from the prison) considers that he is "blessed to be in England" (*DS* 259), his course of life there does not run as expected. After coming to England he encounters racial suspicion, usually targeted against the foreigners especially on the blacks, in the white world. His intimacy with a white girl Denise, who brings food to him in a desolate house, is misinterpreted by the girl's father. As a result, Gabriel/Solomon is accused of abusing the white girl, and is taken to the police custody. Gabriel is not only suspected of raping the girl, but he is viewed through the residual colonial stereotype of "sambo to suprespade, with rampant sexuality as the undignified barometer of black men's changing status" (Phillips, *A New World Order* 46). While discussing Marvin Gaye in his collection of essays *A New World Order* Phillips observes: "African-American males remain the only migrant group in the American world whose social standing upon arrival was deeply wedded to their ability to perform sexually" (35). The black male had been an object of racial stereotype in white societies in which his power of sexuality had been overemphasised. Such stereotypes contained the white man's fear and envy against the black males, because it is imagined to pose threat to the masculinity of the white males. Phillips notes how these stereotypes are associated with the black men in America:

White American society placed so much emphasis upon black male sexuality that is created for itself an imaginary nightmare. A fear

was engendered in white America's soul that somehow African-Americans were more highly sexed and therefore likely to be both a threat to white females and a source of comparative embarrassment to the white males.... His most potent 'weapon' was neither the gun nor brain, it was to be the penis. (*A New World Order* 45)

For Phillips, through the instance of Gabriel, these stereotypes about black males in America remain extended even to the European whites. Because of this suspicion of sexual molestation on Gabriel, he is treated inhumanly, and finally incarcerated.

As a stranger or foreigner in England, Gabriel undergoes extreme levels of verbal abuse by both the warders and prisoners. From beginning "[t]he procedure at the police station was swift and disrespectful" (*DS* 167). In spite of his deep and strong sense of diasporic identity, he is aware of the presence of a dehumanising racial consciousness that has constructed his position as a marginalised in the social consciousness of England. According to Edward Said, "the Orientals are rarely *seen* or *looked at*; they are *seen through*, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems *to be solved or confined* or—as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory—taken over" (*Orientalism*, 207; emphasis added). This "panoptic awareness," in Foucault's words, induces a state of "conscious" and "permanent visibility" that assure the automatic functioning of power by which the surveillance is permanent as its effects (*Discipline* 201). As an asylum seeker, this panoptic presence of the West/England or their dehumanising gaze is ever-present on the colonised. Such a prejudice is all-pervasive in the sociocultural and legal structures, institutions and in people, like the warder, barman, hooligans and

villagers in England. Gabriel recounts: “The corridor is filled with policemen who are *staring* at him...” (DS 145; emphasis added), and “[the warder] *looks at* Gabriel as though *studying an animal* in a zoo” (DS 96; emphasis added). While this “visibility is a trap” (Foucault, *Discipline* 200), Solomon does not experience an ‘eye-to-eye contact’ from the people around him rather it is the ‘stare’ that he is constantly aware of. Solomon reflects, “The man next to me will not speak to me...I have no desire to torment this conversation out of this reluctant man...But the man continues to stare resentfully out of the window and *refuses* to meet my eyes” (DS 264–65; emphasis added). As a black man and an asylum seeker in the metropolitan centre, this sense of constant surveillance makes him apprehensive. The narrator observes, “Night fell quickly, and Gabriel was concerned that a policeman might apprehend him and start to ask difficult questions” (DS1 49–50). Thus this constant surveillance and gazes diminish and dehumanise Gabriel. It not only does diminish him, but also demands of him how he needs to be. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin speak of the effect of the conqueror’s gaze on the vanquished as they observe, “... the imperial gaze defines the identity of the subject, objectifies it within the identifying system of power relations and confirms its subalterneity and powerlessness” (*Key Concepts* 226). Such a gaze is simultaneously destructive and constructive. As soon as Gabriel is acquitted, he leaves London for the north and disguises his name as Solomon so that he may not be recognised. His escape from the south to the north of England is an escape from the visibility of these ‘othering gazes.’

In Weston too, where he lives lately, he experiences vehement racial antagonism. The razor blades and threatening letters that he receives and the dog–

mess placed in the letterbox are manifestations of how England is trying to keep him outside the boundaries of ‘European tribe.’ These are only the prelude to what is in store for him in the hands of a group of young bullies. The white village hooligans in their mirth grab Solomon and brick him until he is dead. Sarah Lawson Welsh observes,

... black Britons have long suffered from invisibility on the map of Britishness despite their *presence* in Britain. The growing visibility of their own creative and experiential mappings of nation, of the complex state of (un)belonging in Britain, has been central to the problematizing and unsettling of received versions of Britishness as well as in undermining notions of a fixed, unchanging construction of nation. (52; emphasis original)

In the case of Solomon, ‘visibility’ and ‘invisibility’ mutually engage in destroying his life as an immigrant in England. England’s ethnocentric attitude obliterates the ‘visibility’ of Solomon as a human being, while in such a society he should be all the time ‘visible’ to the racist attitudes, practices and institutions. This paradox of visibility and invisibility renders the psychological disorientation of Solomon in England.

The systematic ill-treatment and the institutionalisation of racism are the focal points of discussion in the story of David Oluwale in “Northern Lights” in *Foreigners*. David Oluwale is a Nigerian who stows away to England in 1949 when he is nineteen. On reaching England, he is sentenced to twenty-eight days of imprisonment for the illegal migration. The entire story of Oluwale is related from

the perspectives of various people who come across with him. He always falls in trouble with the police, whose ways he could not understand. He is not mad but he does not just understand the system. Consequently, he reacts against the unjust treatment meted out to him by questioning them and for which, he is brutally treated in the hospital and prisons. The news spread one day that David is drowned after being chased by two police, and there comes an end to his brutal treatment.

The influx of the ‘strangers’ and ‘foreigners’ into the heart of Britain terrified the nation due to its fear of losing its homogenous character. Therefore, as Maire N. Fhlathuin observes, “It was met with a hostile response from many of the indigenous inhabitants, their fear of economic competition compounded by their long-established sense of the racial superiority of white people” (31). Oluwale’s journey aspiring to become an engineer in this context occurs through a series of events beginning from his departure from his Yoruba people in Nigeria in 1949 to England; “Leaving home for the rich white man’s world” (*FO* 156). His travel from the colonial peripheries of Britain’s colony of Nigeria, to the ‘Mother country,’ as Oluwale dreams of it, is part of his transnational migration for education and better opportunities. Like every African, instilled with a sense of insecurity, he too aspires for a better prospect in life and “... to return as a successful man with twinkle in [his] eyes and with England tucked away in [his] jacket, ready to produce and display it to any who might wish to glimpse [his] pocket jewel” (*FO* 156). But, his physical and psychological distress begins when he becomes a brutal target of xenophobia, coupled with institutionalised racism in England. Consequently, the ‘jewel’ of his life vanishes away from his dreams of becoming an engineer. Thus, there are two factors in British society that deter

David Oluwale's presence in its soil and making a progress in his life; first, xenophobia of the British society or the fear for the foreigners and outsiders; and second, the supporting institutionalisation of racist attacks, especially in policing.

During the colonial period, the influx of immigrants in Britain's soil was reckoned to be threatening the racial character of the English society and therefore, the presence of immigrants from the British colonies was considered, to a great extent, unwanted and nightmarish. This fear is noticeable in the anti-Black sentiments expressed under Clement Attlee's Labour government in England: "An influx of coloured people domiciled here is likely to impair the harmony, strength and cohesion of our public and social life and to cause discord and unhappiness among all concerned" (Carter 24). The narrator in the novel *Foreigners* observes, "The mother country was welcoming her citizens at the front door, then quickly ushering them out through the back door crying 'No Blacks,' crying, 'No Coloureds,' crying, 'Go back to where you come from'" (FO 196). Oluwale confronts a similar situation, in which, whenever he wants to go to a pub he finds a sign board on the window that says: "No Coloureds, No Dogs, No Gypsies" (*Foreigners* 184). It reveals the fundamental attitude of the British towards the blacks like Oluwale. Oluwale, in his 'British' identity, is judged as a 'problem' and they keep him outside the definitions of 'English'. This predicament is evident in his words: "I am from a British colony and I'm British ... so why do they call me 'nigger'?" (FO 172). Caryl Phillips quotes the words of Enoch Powell in his *A New World Order*: "The West Indian or Asian does not by being born in England become an Englishman. In law he is a United Kingdom citizen, by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or Asian still" (274). But most of the immigrants, like David

Oluwale, in Britain from the colonies regarded the country as the ‘Mother country’ and therefore, “They took their British citizenship seriously, and many regarded themselves not as strangers, but as kinds of Englishmen” (Fryer 374). However, to David Oluwale, life in Britain becomes what Phillips describes as the “vexing question of belonging.” It is vexing because “... the once great colonial power ... Britain has always sought to define her people, and by extension the nation itself, by identifying those who don’t belong” (*Extravagant Strangers* XIII). The undesirability of David Oluwale in Britain’s land and his constant displacements lead to his psychological disorientation in the ‘mother country,’ where his “... identities are constructed and offered up to them by British society” (Ledent, “Only Connect” 184).

One of the reasons for Oluwale’s psychological disorientation is his constant exposure to the police and his brutal treatment at their hands. Although chased and brutalised by the police persistently, he hesitates to hide from them. As a result, he is easily discovered by the two policemen and without any reasons is ill-treated frequently. Racism as an institutionalised practice has been one of the significant aspects of British society. John McLeod points out, “racist attitudes were at the heart of authoritarian forms of state control and clearly animating the discourses of nation, citizenship and law and order which impacted readily in London and elsewhere” (*Postcolonial London* 130). In April 1968 Enoch Powell, a post-war racist politician in Britain, declared in his notorious “Rivers of Blood” speech his hostility towards black immigrants:

[A]s I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood’. That tragic

and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic but which there is interwoven with the history and existence of the States itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. (“Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' Speech” n.pag)

In response to Powell’s statement, McLeod observes that “Powell’s declarations of race and nation sadly granted political respectability to racism and attracted instant popular support, the effects of which were immediately felt on London’s streets (and elsewhere)” (*Postcolonial London* 129). In England, harassed by the police, Oluwale is imprisoned and treated in a mental sanatorium, where brutality and drugs trickle away the optimism and buoyancy left in him. On release, in the streets of Leeds he obstinately refuses to leave his city, despite persistent efforts by the policemen to drive him out. The act of hunting for David Oluwale by police is ended only when he drowns ‘mysteriously’ in the river, in one of such hunting missions. Policing in Britain was often influenced by racist notions of black criminality which led to heavy-handed police tactics. These acts were supported by the notorious “sus” law, Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act, that allowed the lawful arrest of someone suspected of committing a criminal offence (McLeod *Postcolonial London* 130). Phillips examines this England that he knows, “Us and them. Lines were not to be crossed. Those who transgressed were to be severely punished by social ostracisation and random acts of violence” (*A New World Order* 244). Thus, while the stories in the novel *Foreigners* are based on the historical facts, Oluwale’s story emphasises specifically on what it means to be a black man in the xenophobic and institutionalised racist spaces of Britain.

Caryl Phillips's *In the Falling Snow* is an examination of the complexities of having a Black British identity in the contemporary times. Having brought up partly by a white stepmother Brenda, married to a white woman Annabelle and now having a biracial son Laurie, Keith Gordon is one of the second generation immigrants of West Indians in England. *In the Falling Snow* is different from Phillips's earlier novels, in that it provides a historical insight into the racial experiences of three generations of black people in Britain. After reaching Britain in 1960, Keith's father Earl encounters racist prejudices, which traumatises his whole life persistently. But when Keith grows up in London his social conditions are a little better than the first generation of his father's times. However, Keith also perceives certain kinds of social ostracism prevailing in England. The third generation is represented by his son Laurie, son of black father Keith and white mother Annabelle. His being called 'halfie' foregrounds the prevalence of racism in the English society in spite of its idealised hybrid culture on the surface.

The story of Keith Gordon moves on the lines of crisis of a black British in modern England as a result of his failures in his personal relationships. He notices the reluctance of the English society in accepting the interracial relationships. When Keith and Annabelle get married in the presence of registrar, it is noticed that, "the registrar would not look them in the face, and the man's hand shook as he turned the book around for them to sign" (*FS* 33). England seems to be holding some kind of absurd ideas about interracial relationships. He mentions about the racial prejudices of his wife's parents who did not like to have a "nigger-lover" (*FS* 24) for their daughter. This was once more confirmed when Keith meets Annabelle's father for the first time. Annabelle's father redirects his resentment

and annoyance away from his daughter to the ‘Negro-lover.’ Annabelle’s father tells Keith, “‘You’re rather like the Irish, aren’t you, with loud voices that get on one’s nerves and always protesting about what exactly? Mind you, at least you people are not bombing innocent civilians. Well, not yet’” (*FS* 42). The sarcasm and antagonism against the blacks are apparent in his words. When Keith fails to explain to Annabelle’s father “the frustrations of his generation”, “the man laughed in his face” (*FS* 42). Soon Keith realises “why local authorities up and down the country had started advertising for race relation liaison officers, people who could help explain black anger to white people, and white liberal do-gooding to disgruntled black people” (*FS* 42–43). He also notices the racist discrimination against the blacks by the police: “...while he would be bashing the books in the university library, out there on the streets there were youths who looked just like him who were being brutalised and beaten by Maggie Thatcher’s police (*FS* 38). Britain as a nation that constructs its concept of ethnicity and nationality on the basis of racial and ethnic prejudices is consistently threatened by the continual presence of blacks. Phillips, in *A New World Order*, notes,

Implicit in the new Thatcherite concept of nationhood was the idea that one could not be both black and British. Black equals bad, British equals good. We will take you as British as long as you look like you belong – no afros, no dashikis, no beads, no shoulder bags, only a suit, tie and briefcase, thank you very much. For the first time in British history, two types of black person were now being officially recognised: the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ – the British and the black, the assimilable and the subversive. (247–8)

While Earl recounts his days, he also cautions the generations to come like his son Keith and Keith's son Laurie. Earl sardonically conveys that conforming to the demands and stereotypes is the means by which one can carve out a strategy of existence in the ethnocentric society like England. He says,

‘Mark you, the one thing they all know is they don’t care much for the foreigner and that is you, man, that is always you, but don’t call them prejudice because that will vex them and don’t tell them that you don’t want to hear them talking like you is savage....What you must do is to play the stranger and nod and smile when they ask you if you know what is a toilet, or if you ever see running water coming from a tap.... Play the damn stranger and you can win in England and may be you don’t run crazy.’ (FS 253–54)

Keith becomes apprehensive of his son's desire to be somewhat 'blacker' in order to belong to his peer group. Laurie's gang-life worries Keith. The excessive and undue 'adoration' of one's race that Fanon describes is evident in the case of Laurie and his gang. In a Forward to the 2008 edition of Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* Ziauddin Sardar observes, "Fanon's anger is not directed simply at *the black man who wants to turn his race white*. He is equally dismissive of the man who adores the Negro: he is as "sick" as the man who abominates him" (xiii–xiv; emphasis original). Phillips highlights the idea that one of the dangers into which the present day black is likely to fall is this excessive adoration for one's race. Keith persuades his son to keep away from such myths by saying, "Laurie, act your age, not your colour" (FS 158). Thus, *In the Falling Snow* reveals about

growing up of the protagonist as a second generation black migrant in England, while it forecasts the anxieties of the present generation within a society that is obsessed with ethnocentric attitudes.

Phillips draws interest to the notions of ethnocentric approach of Europe by turning his attention from the experiences of blacks in America and England to the issues of Jews in the Europe of Renaissance in the fifteenth century and to that of the German and Polish Jews during Second World War. While analysing the story of Eva in her doctoral thesis, Renee T. Schatteman makes a significant observation about Phillips's treatment of the issues of Jews: "[By] accentuating this chronicle of displacement of a white character, Phillips is in effect challenging the notion of literary exclusionism which discourages writers from delineating experience outside of their own race or gender" (*Caryl Phillips, J.M. Coetzee, and Michael Ondaatje* 63–64). This justifies why Phillips engages the themes of the Jews in his novels. A retreat into the pain and suffering of the Jews inflicted by the Europe in these two separate periods exposes the miserable positions to which the Jews were reduced over the years. Admiringly, Phillips finds a parallel between the sufferings of the blacks and the Jews in the European context of racism and ethnocentrism. He argues "Jew is still Europe's nigger" (*European Tribe*, 53), emphasising the marginal positions of both the blacks and the Jews as outsiders. As Stef Craps mentions, "... by placing stories of black and Jewish suffering alongside one another, Phillips is in fact taking a metonymical rather than a metaphorical view of history" (198). The conception of the Jews as demonic and subhuman in an age of Enlightenment and Humanism, and the mechanised persecution and extermination of millions of Jews in Holocaust in twentieth

century have been revisited by Phillips to expose that Europe has not essentially changed from its approach towards the Jews from the fifteenth to twentieth century.

Jewish presence in Europe has a history of hundreds of years. They have been a generation of people who constitute a significant share of migrants in Europe, and have had their significant contributions in the cultural, political and economic spheres of Europe. But the persecutions inflicted upon them as a separate ethnic group and as outsiders have created their position quite precarious in Europe. With the story of fifteenth century Jews who had fled persecution in Germany and settled in the Venetian city of Portobuffole, Phillips takes a look back into the times of Renaissance, a period in which Europe reached in its cultural glory, while manifesting its deep-seated inclination towards racism and xenophobia. In *The Nature of Blood*, the position of the Jews remains to be as outsiders long after their arrival in Venice. After having wreaking enormous amount of suffering and persecution in Germany, the Jews were expelled from their ghettos. In Germany people were scared of the Jews during 1349 when the plague began to spread across the country, because the Jews were considered to be the reason behind spreading this malady. The narrator observes, "... the Jews began to suffer as this Christian hysteria manifested itself in violence" (NB 50). Many of the Jews unable to withstand the persecutions during these days set fire to themselves in synagogues, and naturally those survived the tragedy were driven out of Germany and many of the survivors fled to Venice. The narrator observes, "Such is the way of the Germans with their Jews" (NB 51).

Although when the narrative of *The Nature of Blood* begins, the time has crossed almost sixty years after the Jews' arrival in Venice, the position of Jews still remains on the margins of Venetian society. "Initially, the people of the republic accepted the Jews from Colonia with all the mistrust that is common among the people who do not know one another. Sadly, as the years passed, this mistrust did not abate.... These Jews arrived as foreigners, and foreigners they remained" (NB 51). The reasons for the exclusion of the Jews at the various levels of the society can be seen from different perspectives. *The Nature of Blood* draws attention to the existence of socio-economic discriminatory practices and persecutions that are combined with the religious stereotypes and myths in the city of Portobuffole in Venice. However, all these exclusionary practices are supported by the complicit roles of the state in perpetuating persecutions on the Jews. Though the basic concept of Enlightenment proposes the unity, rationality and equality of man, the prejudice against the Jews was not that they were essentially different, but that they were backward (Maccoby 25). Obviously, this concept of their backwardness in all levels, as explicated in the novel, pushes them out of a political and legal-justice system.

From the socio-economic point of view, the Jews in *The Nature of Blood* are tolerated in Portobuffole in Venice for their business in money-lending. During the Middle Ages, the Jews were gradually barred from all honourable professions, such as medicine, law, manufacturing, university teaching, farming etc, so that they were allowed to make their living only by money-lending, for which, however, they were belittled. Money lending became part of their image in prejudiced Christian eyes, so that it seemed impossible that they could do anything

else (Maccoby 41–42). In spite of their welcoming service of money–lending to the people of Venice, they were ostracised and condemned for the same act. Phillips notes, “People detested the Jews for a variety of reasons, but the most often cited referred to their position in society as people who would loan money at an interest, more often than not requiring extravagant security from the borrower” (NB 52). Having prohibited taking up any professions, the Jews had resorted to money–lending as the means of their livelihood. Maccoby observes that since the taking of interest was forbidden to Christians, whereas Jews, being regarded as lost souls, were even encouraged to take up an activity which society needed and the practice of ‘usury’ reinforced the image of the wicked Jew (22). Already carrying a degrading image of “deicides,” (Maccoby 1) the killers of God, the image of evil practitioners of usury together made their position more precarious in the society. While perceiving them as social outcasts, they were hated and brutalised for the image that was thrust upon them. “[The] legacy of the medieval diabolization of the Jew was the chief ingredient in the antisemitism of the Enlightenment and post–Enlightenment period” (Maccoby 1).

One of the significant aspects of discrimination was concerned with the ‘visibility’ of the marginalised. As a significant discriminatory practice of the Venetian society against the Jews, they were required to wear yellow stitching on their clothes that demarcated them from the rest of the Venetians. This resembled the yellow stars during Nazi regime. The narrator notes, “...the Doge’s inner *Council of Ten* ... passed a law according to which the Jews were instructed to distinguish themselves by yellow stitching on their clothes” (NB 52). Thus, the Europeans generally developed a predilection for hatred and aversion towards the

Jews. Though there were rules and laws protecting the Jews, in reality, they were all intended to procure covert benefits to non-Jewish Venetians.

Although Jews contributed significantly to the state in terms of money-lending, for the Christians, the Jews were a threat against their institutions of faith. During the intercessionary prayers for the officials in the church and the state, the parish priest concludes the prayer with a special invocation to God,

We also pray for the malicious Jews so that You, God, can take away the venom of their spirits so that they may come to recognize Jesus Christ....grant us prayers that we might pray for the blindness of these Jews so that recognizing the light of your truth in Christ, they may soon be taken from their darkness. (*NB* 94)

The age-old problem that the Jews posed before the Church is their refusal to accept Jesus as the Saviour. Though given an air of objectivity in the investigations and judicial procedures, the account of one of the accused Jews Servadio, illustrates the duplicity and pretensions of Christians and their hostility towards the Jews. He recognises how the Jews easily stand defenseless to the fanciful accusations of the Christians in Venice. The narrator in the novel observes, “But here on earth, in the eyes of Christian, he knew it was easy for a Jew to sin. One could sin even without knowing it” (*NB* 97). The demonisation and vilification of the Jews during the Middle Ages had been principally based on the religious myths and stereotypes, by which they were seen as the ‘deicides,’ the killers of Jesus. According to Maccoby, “the myth that dominates their inner mind is not one of Christians persecuting Jews, but of Jews persecuting Christians; that

is, the alleged persecution of Jesus and his disciples and of the early Church by the Jewish establishment” (4).

After having endured years of marginalisation and social ostracism, there comes a critical moment of crisis in the life of Jews in Portobuffole as they encounter terrific racial and religious hysteria. A Christian boy called Sebastian New is believed to have disappeared, and the accusation falls on the prominent Jews of Portobuffole like Servadio, Moses and Giacobbe. The boy is suspected of being kidnapped by them and killed for his blood to be added to the unleavened bread required for the Passover day. The gossip spreads in accordance with the usual ‘blood–libel myth’ prevalent against the Jews. Emerging in Northern Europe during the thirteenth century, the blood–libel myth held that Jews used the blood of Christian children for their Passover celebrations (Chazan 126). In this context, it is to be noted what Anne Whitehead observes: “Phillips develops the metaphor of blood into a complex and multi–faceted image, so that it becomes a substance which both unites and separates people” (113). Along with the suspicion and fear against Jews, Christians viewed the Jews as their murderers, the blood–sucking vampires. The narrator in the novel observes: “Not only had the Jews killed Jesus Christ, but during Holy Week it was common practice for them to re-enact this crime and kill a Christian child...” (NB 51–52).

Having declared the three Jews guilty, the political prudence compels Doge and his Council in Venice to conduct the trial of the accused, though they were themselves dubious of the accusations in the beginning. In a scene of trial the three accused are stretched to *strappada*, a means of torturing in which the person is

suspended in the air with the help of a rope tied to their wrists, and confessions to the satisfaction of the Council are extracted. Ashley Dawson argues that such physical torture was incorporated into the Republic's legal justice system "... in part inspired by the recent rediscovery of Roman civil law, which included the routine use of physical violence as part of the trial" (88). Even with such forced confessions, no trace of evidences could be detected against them, but the three Jews become the scapegoats while their punishment is pronounced. It is evidently purported to appease the public, but the cost they pay for that is the three lives of innocent people. Ashley Dawson argues, "The state could and often did choose to decapitate mob violence by itself prosecuting such violence in an organised fashion. [This] decision made by Venice's ruling elite to execute the Jews of Portobuffole [is] in order to preserve their hold on power" (88). The irony and sarcasm involved in the judicial system is amplified by the narrator of the novel: "The Most Serene Republic of Venice not only boasted of its severe justice, but was also proud of its flawless procedure" (NB 96). Paradoxically, the incongruity of the 'flawless procedure' is proved during the investigations, legal procedures and the punishment accorded to the accused. Thus after extensive persecutions, confessions, and ultimately in a ritualistic parade of justice and power, the three Jews are eventually rowed across the Grand Canal and burned at the stake. In his nonfiction "The European Tribe," Phillips examines the racism and nationalism that is prevalent so powerfully in Europe, which basically shares the characteristics of 'tribalism.' Tribalism is the attitude and practice of harbouring a strong feeling of loyalty or bonds to one's tribe that one excludes or even demonises those "others" who do not belong to that group. This exclusion is

manifested in engaging or failing to engage with the “other” in obtaining the necessities of life (Nothwehr 5). This particular character of Europe that Phillips calls ‘European Tribalism,’ is the particular attitude of a global community of whites caught up in a Eurocentric history (*The European Tribe* 131). The Jews in Portobuffole become the victims of such European tribalism that excludes other races and ethnic groups from its cultural, political and even social territories.

The history of Jewish Holocaust in twentieth century tells the degree of depth and intensity of Europe’s attitude towards the outsiders and strangers. While Renaissance view of the Jews had been mainly based on the religious stereotypes and myths circulated in Europe, anti-semitism and Holocaust were the results of Europe’s ethnocentric attitudes. According to Zigmund Bauman, “Antisemitism stands for the resentment of Jews. It refers to the conception of the Jews as an alien, hostile and undesirable group, and to the practices that derive from, and support, such a conception” (*Modernity* 34). It is not only the ethnocentric attitudes of Europe that caused the victimisation of Jews, but rather, it is also due to the complicity of social and political instruments. William I. Brustein’s argument is relevant here. According to him, anti-Semitism is a multifaceted form of prejudice that contains religious, racial, economic, and political manifestations which had become embedded in Western culture over centuries (xii). Holocaust is the continuation of that anti-Semitic sentiments prevailing in Europe over the centuries, though it does not fully explain the causes for such an immense scale of persecution of humanity in the history.

Hyam Maccoby finds a connection between the history of persecution of Jews in renaissance period and the Nazi persecutions of twentieth century:

Hitler and the Nazis used every slander that had been made against the Jews in the Christian past: the blood–libel, the medieval picture of the Jewish usurer, the conspiracy theory of the Elders of Zion, the later medieval portrayal of the Jews as subhuman, the Spanish fear of Jewish racial taint. Hitler’s favourite reading was Luther’s rantings against the Jews.... Nazism was a secular, blasphemous version of the Christian myth in which the Jews played their ancient role of satanic adversary. (2)

While modernity and its associated developments are seen through the prism of progress and a step in the way of modern civilization, Holocaust casts a shadow over its proclaimed advancements. While discussing the issue of Jews, Ashley Dawson lends the view of Zygmunt Bauman and Paul Gilroy who opine that modernity and the civilising process that attends to it have not eradicated anti–social drives but have, rather, concentrated violence in the hands of the state (89). In Zygmunt Bauman’s own words, “the Holocaust can only be understood as the failure of civilization (i.e. of human purposive, reason–guided activity) to contain the morbid natural predilections of whatever has been left of nature in man” (*Modernity* 13).

Although Irina in *Higher Ground* is neither a slave nor a detainee in the concentration camps like Eva in *The Nature of Blood*, Irina too experiences the brunt of racist prejudices which can damage her psyche. While Eva’s story is

unfolded through her experiences in German concentration camp and her post-Holocaust survival in the liberated camps, Phillips throws light on both Irina's and Eva's sufferings within broader context of European racism and anti-Semitism. Phillips renders voice to Irina and Eva Stern, the victims of Nazi persecutions to tell the tales of thousands of victims of European racism and anti-Semitism. As Ivan Kreilkamp comments, "Jewish Holocaust survivors and their heirs are proprietary over the rights to the narration of their community's tragedy" (44). By presenting the stories of Irina and Eva separately from two different angles, Phillips intends to depict the harrowing experiences of Jewish sufferings in the Holocaust. While Irina does not directly undergo the dehumanising experiences in the concentration camps, she is not without sufferings. Her story becomes an instance of how the Jewish hatred and violence 'killed' Jews even by not victimising them in concentration camps. The exile that is forced upon her makes her psychologically unbalanced. Eva's story exemplifies as to what extent European racism is possible and to what extent the total annihilation of Jews becomes the only solution to remove the ethnically different people from its nationhood.

In Poland, Irena's life becomes one of turbulence under the threat of Nazi persecutions, and in England, she lives an abandoned and isolated life. Irina's and her family's life in ghettos of Poland, immediately before the German occupation, shows the deplorable conditions into which the Jews were thrown during the days of terror. Joanna B. Michlic examines, "In the case of Poland the majority ethnic group, the Poles, perceived a minority, the Jews, as the harmful alien.... [This] has to be considered one of the main causes for the marginalization of Polish Jews by

the ethno-nationalist political camp” (Michlic 132). Living in England, Irene remembers the cruel days in Poland when her sister Rachel was beaten up. While they could not dig out the reasons for such cruel treatment, they also realise “the attack was not unexpected” (HG 191). Joanna B. Michlic notes that the negative representations of Jews in the interwar period and in Polish publications during Second World War should be viewed as one of the causes of three major developments: “the low level of general approval in Polish society for ethnic Poles rescuing Jews from the Nazis; the hostile or indifferent attitude of a significant segment of ethnic Poles toward the fate of their Jewish fellow citizens; and anti-Jewish actions by some Poles, including Polish-initiated anti-Jewish violence during WWII” (132). Thus in all possible levels, the Jews were considered as strangers, and therefore isolated. The psychological terror and weariness were evident in everybody’s mind. Irene remembers that her mother, in those days, had started “showing signs of tired resignation, and had formed a habit of speaking to strangers with her eyes lowered” (HG 191). The excess of psychological anxiety goes to the extreme, and Irina, during those days, starts seeing ominous dreams. In one of such dreams she sees that her Papa “lying in gutter, his legs twitching as though trying to shake off tightly fitting shoes” (HG 192). This fear of being killed and brutalised had been a constant source of worry and distress to Irina’s family and the Jews in general in the ghettos of Poland. “*Harginnen*. They are going to kill us” (HG 192) has been the distressful cry with everyone. Finally, the frightened mama and papa of Irena decide to send their children in hiding expecting their fleeing would enable, at least the children, escape the imminent torture and brutality.

Irena arrives in England, “where she knew nobody, with a suitcase and a photograph album (and a feeling that she was being punished), a mind tormented by the fear that she might never again touch or hold her sister” (*HG* 202). In England, as a stranger and a Jewess, Irena’s life becomes complicated. She falls into foolish love relationships, becomes pregnant, ends up the married life, and finally attempts to throw herself under a train; she is then admitted to a mental sanatorium. In England not only does she find safety from the Nazis, but also alienation and loneliness (Sharpe 27). There “in her nightmare there was never any air. Bolted, suffocating, and trying to survive a journey” she shouts frequently, “*Harginnen*. They are going to kill us” (*HG* 218). Phillips shows how European ethnocentric attitudes have been instrumental and fateful in taking away the tranquillity of one’s life through the instances of Irena/Irene.

In *The Nature of Blood*, Eva Stern, a young Jewish woman, is liberated by the English army from a scheduled extermination in a Nazi concentration camp. The story of her suffering is related through a series of flashbacks and memories. As Renee T. Schatteman observes, “The novel reveals that recovering from the Holocaust can be impossible and as devastating as the experience of surviving it” (*Caryl Phillips, J.M. Coetzee, and Michael Ondaatje* 64). Eva’s voice surfaces from the gravity of her traumatic experiences of Holocaust days and its immediate psychological effects. The Jews’ position in Germany in the early twentieth century was viewed as a constant threat. This culminated in the mass extinction of millions of Jews, a cruelty that the humanity has not yet been able to comprehend. Marion A. Kaplan observes that imbued with traditional anti-semitism and supported by anti-Semitic legislation, racism was normalised. As racism began to

spread in every aspect of life, the people lived with 'Jews Not Wanted' signs and remained indifferent to what happened to the Jews. Still others took it for granted that persecution of the 'racial enemy' was normal and necessary for an undoing of the Jews (9). In Hitler's myth of a new world, the Jews personified as devil, vampire and parasites in the country. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Germany's economy was in crisis, unemployment was widespread and the people's national self-confidence was at a low ebb. Hitler diagnosed Germany's degeneration as being directly proportional to the triumph of Jewry, which, as it spread its tentacles, was threatening the world (Hellig 25). Such an image of the Jews also threatened the Nazi idea of purity of blood in Germany. Hitler realised that racial mixing would lead to the destruction of civilisation and saw the Jews as the ultimate pollutant who was the "most extreme contrast to the Aryan" (Hellig 24). Therefore, for Hitler and the Nazis, the Jews had to be kept out of Germany through 'total annihilation.'

The fundamental problem for Eva, as she thinks, is having her Jewish identity. In her words "... at eighteen I now understood how cruel life could be" (*NB* 70). The days preceding the deportation and dehumanisation of the Jews, their everyday life substantially got deteriorated. Psychologically, the people were at a complete loss and they stumbled in confusion and disorientation. Apart from the intimidating police searches, Jewish families faced the whimsical prohibitions on shopping, travelling and renting houses. At the same time, the Jews were gazed as strangers and were insulted publicly. Marion A. Kaplan observes, "Strangers on trams, in stores, and even on the street targeted those who "looked" Jewish and

mortified their victims by pronouncing their suspicions loudly” (34). Eva remembers those days of humiliation with terror.

There was humiliation. There was daily anxiety of being easy prey for groups of men who ran through the streets yelling slogans. There was the torment of their cruel slaughter. There was the fear of being betrayed by a gesture, a slip of tongue, or an accent. There was waiting and worrying.... Forbidden to ride on a trolley-car. Forbidden to sit in a park. Permitted to breathe. Permitted to cry.
(NB 85)

The essential human dignity and distinction is undermined during the deportation to the concentration camps, where, “Lying in the straw sodden with faeces and vomit, all classes and social distinctions had disappeared.... And then undernourished and tired, their minds eventually slowed to a pounding numbness...” (NB 161). Eva recognises at the death-camp: “human life is cheap” (NB 167). The trauma of witnessing enormous scale of oppression and persecution makes her imagine, “How is it possible to be angry with people who have done you no wrong?” (NB 162). Ashley Dawson notes, “The inhuman conditions of the concentration camp seemed, in other words, to justify the Nazi’s claim that Jews were, at bottom, sub-human” (90). The human- “livestock” (NB 167), “grotesque figures, naked and without hair” (NB 164) and, “... a small tangle of bones covered with skin that is stretched tight and stained with bruises and bites. Bald and powerful eyes” (NB 167–68) all amply convey the dehumanising experiences of the Jews under Nazi persecutions. At the gas chambers, human slaughter is

observed with a feel of awful detachment: "...this death is a trivial affair. It has become a habit..." (NB 167). In such a struggle for life, "... only the strongest can survive" (NB 17). This psychological inertness and disorientation experienced at the triviality of human existence makes Eva's life equally vegetative and traumatic.

Phillips's novels through demonstrating the experiences of the blacks, the Jews and the Asians focus on the continued and crushing racist, ethnocentric and xenophobic attitudes of Europe and America. Against this disturbing contexts, Phillips dreams of a 'new world order', in which each one acquires an ability to coexist and tolerate the 'other's' presence. Phillips once said that "whether we liked it or not we were all becoming multicultural individuals. This was not only inevitable, it was also highly desirable" ("The Silenced Minority"). His ambition to coexist in multicultural world is apparent in what he designs as "The New World. A twenty-first-century world. A world in which it is impossible to resist the claims of the migrant, the asylum seeker, or refugee" (*A New World Order* 5). Here, as he expects, there will be no more colonial/postcolonial/neo-colonial 'others' and the disoriented subjects.

The next chapter of the thesis seeks to document how African slaves formulate anti-hegemonic resistance by subverting dominant colonial discourses and forging resistant struggles against the colonisers' diverse forms of colonial power. The African experience in the transatlantic slavery has been very traumatic in a number of ways. In the process of their colonisation, the coloniser's cultural devices become the most embedded form of colonial control over the cultural,

social and psychological realms of the slaves. This hegemonic relationship between the master and the slave, constructed through colonial ideologies and colonial discourses, become a hurdle for the colonised/the slave to emerge free and liberated. Only it is in the spirit that Frantz Fanon states there is a possibility of severing the ties with colonialism. Fanon notes, “I am my own foundation. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom” (*Black Skin: White Masks* 180). The slaves in Phillips’s novels attempt to redefine their positions struggling to shed off the shackles of colonisers’ enslaving devices which allow them to experience a sense of self-worth and freedom at the end.