



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية

ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <http://jls.tu.edu.iq>



## Identity Crises in Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* (2004)

Asst. Inst. Iman Saud Dhannoon \*

College of Medicin , University of Tikrit

[emansuod@gmail.com](mailto:emansuod@gmail.com)

Recived: 29 /4/ 2022, Accepted: 19 /5/2022 , Online Published : 17/7/2022

### Abstract

It is commonly stated that the modern era is known as the age of upheavals. Colonialism has altered people all over the world, and transculturalism has become a global phenomenon. Writers, particularly, novelists managed to depict identity crises in their literary works. The study will be based on a textual analysis of Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore*, focusing on Homi Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity', Krestiva's 'dislocation' and Edward Said's notion of 'self-other'. The aim of the paper is to explore the themes of hybrid identities and painful negotiations based on the experience of the protagonists in the selected text. The objective of the study is to identify the characters who suffer individual mobility and the causes behind, to investigate the relationships between the immigrants and the new environment, and to show the kind of identity the immigrants will lead in the future. The research will answer the following questions: What circumstances make the protagonists migrate? How immigrants can cope with others in the new country? And how displacement affects in shaping the identity of the immigrant characters in the selected novel? The paper consists of introduction, critical comments on the text, and definitions of theoretical concepts according to the selected work, and a conclusion.

**Key words:** Caryl Phillip, upheavals, crises, colonialism, transculturalism, hybrid.

\* **Corresponding Author:** Iman Saud Dhannoon , **E.Mail:** [emansuod@gmail.com](mailto:emansuod@gmail.com)  
**Tel:** +9647739123456 , **Affiliation:** Tikrit University -Iraq

## ازمات الهوية في رواية كارل فيليبس "شاطيء بعيد" (2004)

م. م. ايمان سعود ذنون

كلية الطب/ جامعة تكريت

**الملخص :** من الشائع أن العصر الحديث يعرف باسم عصر الاضطرابات. لقد غير الاستعمار الناس في جميع أنحاء العالم، وأصبحت التعددية الثقافية ظاهرة عالمية. تمكن الكتاب ، وخاصة الروائيين ، من تصوير أزمات الهوية في أعمالهم الأدبية. تستند الدراسة إلى تحليل نصي لرواية الكاتب الانكليزي كاريل فيليبس "شاطيء بعيد"، مع التركيز على مفهوم المنظر هومي بابا عن "التهجين" ومفهوم كريستيفا "الخلع" و إدوارد سعيد عن "الأخر الذاتي" ان الهدف من الدراسة هو استكشاف مواضيع الهويات الهجينة والمفاوضات المؤلمة بناء على تجربة الأبطال في النص المختار. أهداف الدراسة هي تحديد الشخصيات التي تعاني من التنقل الفردي والأسباب الكامنة وراءها ، للتحقيق في العلاقات بين المهاجرين والبيئة الجديدة ، وإظهار نوع الهوية التي سيقودها المهاجرون في المستقبل. كما وان البحث سيجيب عن الأسئلة التالية: ما الذي جعل الأبطال في الرواية يهاجرون الى بلدان اخرى؟ كيف يمكن للمهاجرين التعامل مع الآخرين وتكييف انفسهم في البلد الجديد؟ وكيف يؤثر التهجير والتهجين في تشكيل هوية الشخصيات المهاجرة في الرواية المختارة؟ تتكون الورقة البحثية من مقدمة حول ازمات الهوية بصورة عامة وتعليقات نقدية حول النص الروائي المختار، وتعريف بمفاهيم نظرية لتفسير النص المختار، اضافة الى الخاتمة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** كارل فيليبس، اضطرابات، ازمات، الاستعمار، التعددية الثقافية، تهجين

### 1. Introduction

Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, for certain reasons, people have witnessed a dramatic increase in crossing borders and leaving their homelands. This global process is connected to postmodern world which is full of upheavals. Colonialization has considerably altered people all over the world. The loss, for numerous factors, begets crises, among of which is identity crises. This world, as Sneja Gunew states, is full of "migrations and diasporas, after two world wars, and many other conflicts ... the mix of people within borders increasing renders traditional national models anachronistic" (23). However, although migration is a mark of colonial hegemony puts people in-between, it has brought immigrants into another world; it creates opportunities for labor, communicate with other cultures, expands horizons, and seeks refuge. Immigrants mostly agree to settle in far places to find humanistic conditions and basic requirements of life. They could not prove their own identity in their lands.

“Their presence ... did not yield in any practical solutions to the black identity” (Runesson 19).

Caryl Phillips (1958), a black Atlantic writer, is known by his fictional works of the experience of individuals of African diaspora in England, America, and Caribbean. In most of his works, the theme of diaspora is dominant. For instance, in *Crossing the River* (1993), Phillips depicts the theme of “slave trade” as a bad ideology against human dignity through portraying the image of Afro-Caribbean social relationships. In this sense, one can imagine that the colonizers “white people” definitely participate, to a wide extent, in shaping the African identity (Benedicte 182), and the colonized “black people” are only sold for trade (190). For this reason Phillips is described as the black Atlantic author (192). Phillips wrote two diverse novels concerning diaspora. His first one, *The Final Passage* (1985), in which he describes the way of living of the oppressed people who migrated from Caribbean to England. While his second novel, *A State of Independence*, was published in 1990, in which he portrays the history of immigrants who returned from the British colonies to their native lands. In both novels Phillips argues diaspora as a mark of British colonies.

Phillips’s life is featured by a series of dislocations, migration, and discomfort. When he grew older, his family left to the Caribbean port of Liverpool, he received his education in the United Kingdom. However, homesick “nostalgia” is still a sense within himself. The desire of exploring the value of transcultural experience to which he has been exposed to in his life. Therefore, he travels a lot, moving between UK and USA, and writing about human rights abuse and dignity because of the colonial hegemony.

Phillips previously expressed the cause behind using a white woman’s voice as a third person narrator in his *Cambridge*. He says: “I was interested in exploring the parallel situations that a woman might find herself in and that black people were definitely in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century” (159). In *A Distant Shore*, Dorothy’s voice is featured by uneasy sense of calmness which is in the beginning vivid. This drives the reader’s attention away, but in the reality of Dorothy’s decreasing mental health, it draws the audience into. About fifty percent of the novel is devoted to the representation of the story of the white English woman. This representation is shown from the viewpoint of postmodernism.

The study aims at exploring the theme of hybrid identity and painful negotiation of Phillips’ characters in the selected novel. It highlights the idea of belonging, dislocation, and cultural differences. The novel is written by a black British writer, and set in an English village, Weston. It presents the issue of transculturalism within a colonial atmosphere. The novel is a documentation of the effects of an individual’s mobility and displacement of the oppressed people. The plot turns itself to focus on a life of a black male and a white female. It deals with obsession, discrimination, and deception of an English woman. Dorothy (55) years, a musician teacher who suffers alienation and isolation in her mother country, lives a life of sacrifice (212) and abandonment (235). The African man, Gabriel (30), insecure foreigner found himself at odds with the surrounding and cannot cope with others. Gabriel has his identity changed as well as his name into Solomon to escape reality.

The novel is divided into five chapters: All deals with the observations of the present and recollections of the past lives of Dorothy and Solomon/Gabriel. Mostly, the narrative is devoted to recalling the events of Solomon’s migration to England and how he was assimilated to the new culture. The novel shows that with the passage of time and as immigrants increase, the displaced individual’s identity becomes hybrid;

in-between. Accordingly, the native identity undergoes changes due to the changes of the place.

The title carries a negative sign, implies the wish of happiness and peace is beyond reaching and it is hardly to be obtained. The unlikely relationship between the two characters suggests racism; black and white; cultural diversity expresses hybrid identity. Consequently, Phillips seems to represent racism in a village in England. Weston is a victim to the fall of Solomon who was savagely murdered. With the flow of a huge number of strangers to England, Phillips, also, seems to argue the flee from anxiety and uncertainty which express the third space and let an individual feel like a stranger in his country. It is very vivid from the very beginning of the novel that “England has changed. These days it’s difficult to tell who’s from around here and who’s not. Who belongs and who’s a stranger. It’s disturbing. It doesn’t feel right” (3). Anxiety and uncertainty which form a part of hybrid identity are considered by Rutherford as “the threat of the dissolution of self that ignites the irrational hatred and hostility as the center struggles to assert and secure its boundaries that construct self from not-self” (10).

In the novel, Dorothy, and to a wider extent, Solomon become ‘strangers’. They endure uncertainty and are alienated because of their hybrid identities. Phillips seems to display a theme of hopelessness, fear, and discomfort of those who are in-between. They are “neither the one ... nor the other” (40). They are “something else besides” (41).

Solomon is a criminal, committed violence actions when he killed his “elderly friend” (80) in a situation when he helped him flee. The discomfort is one of the crises the characters suffer from in the novel consequent colonialism. Both Solomon and Dorothy are traumatized and captured by the past events. Everyone feels her/himself as a stranger. S/he is not satisfied with the new system of life. Phillips portrays the scene in a manner that makes the reader perceive Solomon as a signifier of immigrants and Dorothy is the embodiment of all depressed women waiting an opportunity to seek a new life. The juxtaposition between her dreams and realism creates, in herself, a sense of unbelonging and displacement “she embodies the dislocation of a person who is in her own home without feeling at home” (Bonnici 287). Solomon’s arrival expresses a friendly mutual relationship and shows his kindness in the beginning. Therefore, Dorothy found herself associated with him more closely, increasingly, at the strangeness of her previous relationship with a black boy. The kind of hybridity the character of Dorothy presented as *psychic hybridity*; a mid-between. She suffers from a shattering self between the English society and the African culture; acceptance and rejection; two contradicted colors; self-otherrelations.

The psychological hybridity that Dorothy endures let her find herself as the other in her mother country. The collapse of her mental health is the ultimate result for which, both Dorothy and Solomon fell victims in spite of joyous talk.

Consequently, the relationship between the migrated people and the host society is argued in the text in the light of the notions of Edward Said’s perspective of ‘self-other’, Homi Bhabha’s ‘hybridity’, and Julia Kristeva’s ‘diaspora’. The justification behind choosing the selected text is to examine the reasons behind the Africans’ migration to England in the selected novel and to explore the effect of the theme of ‘hybrid identity’ in the selected text. Although much research had been done on the selected novel, it was not tackled from the perspectives of the tree theorist: Bhabha, Said, and Kristeva in collection.

## **2. Critical Comment**

Phillips has succeeded in utilizing the style of presenting the lives of the parallel black man in a society of a white female through the relation of uncanny situations of migration. As the text presents that Dorothy was born and lived in the village of Weston and that is clarified when she was asked by Solomon whether she likes England, she replied: "I really don't know anything else ... this is where I am from and I've got anything to compare to it except France. I once went there on a day trip" (35). She, after that, adds: "I suppose it seems a bit pathetic to you. Doesn't it?" (35). What makes the situation pathetic is her lives, education, friends, ... etc. All is in that village where she was born and grew up.

Weston, to Dorothy, means everything in life; it is the place where her parents born, lived, and died, as she stated "parents were born in this town, and they lived and died here. They are both buried in the local cemetery, side by side" (201). Dorothy suffers from discomfort from the beginning. This is due to many reasons such as the rejection by society, failed marriage, the unsuccessful relationships, the raucous family life, and finally, the doomed friendship with the black man. Dorothy's relationship, as the reader has been told, with her father is not in a good term. It is rather complicated. He prefers to give attention to the younger daughter, Sheila, more than Dorothy. Thus, the later explains this relationship as follows:

*Unfortunately, while I seemed to get on with Dad, Sheila barely spoke to him. To begin with they used to get on. I may have been the 'son', but she was definitely the much-loved daughter. I was actually jealous of her for he used to dote on her, and take her to the allotments, and buy her presents, so much so that I used to call her 'Dady's little pet'. But as she got older, and grew to know her own mind, Dad seemed to change towards her (10).*

Hence, Dorothy lives the sense of unbelonging to the place where she lives and has memories about. The feeling began at home. Her first experience was a rejection by her father. The father doesn't want her at home. He adores her younger sister. This situation is followed by many illnesses that gradually increased in her mind and soul which lead to the collapse of her mental health. It was her first experience in life. It is an internal and domestic matter.

The second painful experience is her marriage relationship with Brian. The reader is informed that when Dorothy went to university during the first year, she "met Brian" (180) for the first time. He was a "public schoolboy, ... had a posh accent and confidence" (181). He so much attracted her. The blandness and sweetness of their conversations collected them during the years of the university but this did not continue:

*For three years he protected her as she struggled with her degree in music, while he seemed to breeze through his course in mathematics, which he regarded as an unwelcome distraction from his passion for beer and rugby. As the time drew near for them to be unleashed upon the world, it was clear to their small group of friends that Brian would propose and they would be married, which, within a few weeks of graduation, they were (182).*

This courting love ends with marriage. Unfortunately, their marriage soon vanishes; ends with divorce. Brian's mobility from one place into another "diaspora" let him arrange for a new marriage to a young woman, and he moved to Spain. Brian feels as a stranger in the country where Dorothy lives, he was discriminated. Dorothy wanted to overcome her feeling with strangeness; therefore, she fell in love with

Brian. Most of the characters in the novel experienced diaspora. They moved here and there to escape reality in which they feel as others in their society. The hybrid identity is seen in Solomon's migration to England, Brian's marriage relationship with Dorothy, and Dorothy's relationship with Mahmud.

Dorothy's third experience is with a doe-eyed Indian man, Mahmud, a married man whose relationship with Dorothy continued merely months and the affairs ended up when Mahmud's wife gave a birth to her first daughter. Dorothy found her herself a stranger with him, she is abandoned yet again. This traumatic experience and the third abandonment created in the self of Dorothy a psychic fracture that grows ever wide. However, Mahmud doesn't want to be a stranger; therefore, he ended his relationship with Dorothy. One night, Dorothy phoned Mahmud in regard that his wife gone to sleep but the conversation is rejected "there is a silence" that is clearly informed by his exasperation. And then he speaks: "You must buy your newspaper somewhere else. I do not wish to know you" (190), he puts down the phone.

### **3. Hybrid Identity**

Identity and hybridity are two dimensions of the post-colonial theory. Hybridity is generated from the failure of the oppressed people in proving their identity in their own countries, or it may take place because of natural disasters which lead to culture change. Therefore, immigrants seek refuge in other countries. The new identity of individuals will be analyzed and shaped in terms of customs and norms of the host society. For example, language, religion, fashion, social manners, style, marriage relationships, ...etc. The most influential is language. Language is an important means of communication thus, immigrants manage to learn it as a preliminary subject in order to cope with the native speakers to safeguard their lives. The loss of an individual's native language implies a loss of formal identity and symbolizes transformation in his nationality. So, hybridity is ultimately achieved. Identity, according to Stuart Hall, is "subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power" ( 226). It is also, a matter of becoming as well as being ...belongs to the future as well as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending time, place and culture" (227).

According to Homi Bhabha, hybridity refers to an essential change in the natives' culture. This change is essentially associated to colonialism and to a space that is called "third space", controversial to cultural identity/ cultural purity. To recognize this space of cultural identity is to overcome the strangeness of social diversity and that it is important to "descend into that alien territory ... may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (*Location of Culture* 38).

Relatively, referring to Phillips's selected novel, Solomon/Gabriel, the protagonist, when he changed his name means that he lacks refuge in his native country. The foreignness grows in himself even when he travelled to the British colonies. The feeling of foreignness places him on a ground of compensate for the calamities he had experiences. His revolt against the English society grows worse that he couldn't familiarize himself to the new norms and discipline, and his adaptation to the new surroundings seems too difficult. The internal fracture is felt through his behavior that Solomon' character is created as specific and distinct. His tone is polite and he speaks less. He always prefers to deliver speech of wisdom. His experience in the new country is shattered between settlement and rejection and his hybrid identity is associated with the status of a refuge/asylum seeker:

The asylum seeker, in particular, have migration forced upon them. It doesn't involve chains, it doesn't involve manacles, it doesn't involve physically brutal Labor, but the psychological trauma can fester for years. These are not economic. Migrants who have bought a ticket. Europe is full of people who are psychologically Scarred, having cut the umbilical cord with their countries ... and as traumatically as people did in the past with slavery. (Phillip's interview with Pulitano 378).

The shadow of Solomon's life makes his past trauma cast his present. Therefore, he attempted to summarize his life as follows: "I would wake from my slumber shaking with consternation ... it appeared that my dreams were permanently cursed (280). He adds "I remember my father and my sister being shot like animals. I tried not to think of these people anymore. I wanted to set these people free ... I was a coward who had trained himself to forget (281).

Hybrid identity is a term embracing East India, South Asian and African-Caribbean oppressed people. It is widely indulged with politics and political matters to refer to the residence of black-color racism. It is historically known as a mixture of various distant identities into one unified sensibility to explore a new lifestyle. Hybrid identity usually follows the step of diaspora mobility in the process of migration from homeland to a host land. This can be realized in the traumatic flight of Solomon, weary migration journey, and his struggle to assimilate to the English society. Phillips, through displaying the manifestation of hard life, seems to suggest something which is the hostility of the new country and restricted placement on the side of the refugees. England, by such restrictions, deals with "foreigners" from Asia and Africa who are "not immigrants, not new and energetic and hard-working members of society" (Mousavizadeh 135). Most significant to know the reasons behind Solomon's migration that he loses his position as "leader of a bridge" (126) of rebel soldiers of the national army. After he had all of his family members killed, he described his country as homeless to him "this is not my home anymore" (79). Soon after the event, Solomon left Africa and joined a group of refugees to England across France.

Phillips, critically, highlights the "European societies are and are not multicultural" (134). In terms of alienation and hybrid identity, he comes to announce that "the African, the Asian ... will remain an alien whose presence must be tolerated but never accepted as permanent" (134). Within this context, Zygmunt Bauman states that "the age of assimilation and exclusion strategies is over" but the matter is how to cope with others/strangers, with the "unknown", he adds "the uncertain and confusing can be thought of" (55). This declaration suggests Bauman's agreement with Phillips in finding facilities and difficulties in communication with the new surroundings; merits and demerits. Ultimately, as the action is built upon a lack of relationships between the two protagonists, we can conclude that Weston's social surroundings imposes restrictions and limitations and allows no interculturalism. However, there is a kind of peaceful conviviality within the society components for the sake of compensation to the failing multicultural relationships.

#### **4. Self and other**

It is a fact that the immigrants who leave their homelands to a host country undergoes identity changes. Accordingly, the relationship between them and the host surrounding becomes in between. This kind of relationship, consequently, is to be

argued here according to Edward Said's notion of 'otherness'. Said, in his seminal book, *orientalism* (1979), stated the self-other relationship as "the vacillation between the familiar and the alien" (72). Said utilized the terms 'familiar', and 'alien' to stand for any relationship between the 'self' and the 'other'. As these concepts are colonial notions, therefore, this should represent the relationship between two opposites; good, bad; colonizers, colonized; the white which shows strength and the black which is always oppressed because of the weaknesses. This contradictory relationship may result in, as Said states, the "validity of the divisions of races into advanced and backward" (205). Based on this basis, the white usually pointed by 'self' and the black are seen as the 'other'. Due to Said's idea, the white/colonizers individuals and groups have superiority over the black/colonized as the black have been invaded by the white and are exploited also. Moreover, the relationship between the self and other has a "mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort" (25). This relationship also steps out as if "one shouldn't trust the evidence of one's eyes watching the destruction and the misery and death brought by the latest mission civilizatrice" (27). In sum, the coherence between these two entities is basically based on cultural, social, political, economic, and religious invasions. Julia Kristeva pointed out the feeling of the immigrant individual in the host country when he feels as stranger:

It is perhaps on the basis of that contemporary individualism's subversion, beginning with the moment when the citizen-individual ceases to consider himself as unitary and glorious but discovers his incoherence and abysses, in short his 'strangeness'-that question arises again: no longer that of welcoming the foreigner within a system that obliterates him but of promoting togetherness of those foreigners that we all recognize ourselves to be ( 3)

Kristeva adds that the alienated individual feels as the 'other', " on the basis of the other, I become reconciled with my own otherness-foreignness, that I play on it and live by it" (182). Kristeva, here, refers to herself as foreigner.

## **5. Diaspora**

As a term, the word means a kind of mass movement, a mobility from one place to another; from a homeland into a host country, under certain circumstances such as persecution or oppression in the home country. This movement may create certain crises of racism, alienation, hybridity, diversity, discomfort, or displacement. The experience of diaspora space is essentially built upon the relationship between the immigrant individuals/groups and the new setting. For instance, displacement is different from one group immigrants into another; it may be occurred in memory, home, or gender. Therefore, diaspora or diversity will be differently affect people in that it may be shaped in gender relationships disregarding all other realities. Social and cultural entities are also influenced by diaspora which signals the process of multi-locations.

Alexander Weheliye, in his book, *In Black Europe and African Diaspora* (2009), defines the concept as it

*Offers pathways that retrace layerings of difference in the aftermath of colonialism and slavery, as well as the effects of other forms of migration and displacement. Thus, diaspora enables the desedimentation of the nation*



*from the 'interior' by taking into account the groups that fail to comply with the reigning definition of the people as a cohesive political subject due to sharing one culture, one race, one language, one religion ..., and from the 'exterior' by drawing attention to the movements that cannot be contained by the nation's administrative and ideological borders (162).*

Weheliye approaches a sociocultural perspective of a nation such as the religious view, cultural, race, ethnicity, social and humanitarian issues. Diasporic mobility may also affect culture. For instance, immigrants, evidently, may gradually lose their native identity and will be affected by the social and cultural norms and laws of the new society. Therefore, hybrid identity is the product of this process of displacement. Persecuted people are logically subjugated to the new cultural discipline and they have to cope and interact with the host country for the sake of peace and security. In the novel, approximately, all the characters experienced diaspora "The dispersal of the ... people and their spread in different natives of the world is ascribed to their complicated life" (Wahlbeck 114).

From the very beginning of the selected novel, Dorothy sketches an image of the village as a "backwater village" that seems to be stuck soon. When she moved to the developed Stoneleigh, she recognized the social incongruence that reigns "our village is divided into two" (3), she states that: "I see everybody all the time ... you can't help it. You go for a walk, or you go to get a paper, or you wait by the bus stop, and there they all are, the cast of the village acting out their assigned roles. Those of us from Stoneleigh, the small groups of extras who live up the hill, have yet to be given our parts. We're still strangers to each, let alone to the other villagers"(11).

Dorothy's sense of unbelonging and feeling like a stranger seem to let her friendship to be forged soon. It may be due to her past state of paranoia. It is something like what Julia Kristeva described "foreigners friends, aside from bleeding hearts who feel obliged to do good, could only be those who feel foreign to themselves ... the paternalists, paranoid and perverse people, who each have the foreigner of their choice" (23).

## **6. Dislocation**

One concept of the postcolonial theory which is the core study of the paper, characterized by the physical movement of people through Caribbean and East India with an aim of getting shelter and creating new identities through cultural possibilities. This movement is due to many factors people suffer from in native lands, among which are human right abuse, patriarchal societies, religious and political issues, poverty, or unemployment. Immigrants do not always find satisfaction and comfort in the host country. Moreover, they may be exposed to violence by government that treated them as residents or 'other'. Thus, debate has been arisen among politicians, laypeople, or even academics who ask for their legal rights.

The refugees, as Kristeva proposed, psychologically sufferer because of the intimate relationship between what is called 'uncanny' and the foreigner (190). Therefore, when one escapes from or struggle against a foreigner, he definitely, is "fighting the unconscious" (191). She adds that one should detect foreignness in the selves and the ultimate conditions of the beings with others" are shown through "recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me ... we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner,

there are no foreigners” (193). Kristeva points out foreignness as a challenge in the limits of ego and security as well.

Jan Jindy Pettman, on the other hand, states that “thinking about home and citizenship becomes much more complicated” as the process of migration has been increased. He adds that ideas of home and place have “real implications for notions of self and citizenship” (217). In that one should expand the thinking about home and citizenship to what culture has produced and introduced to the immigrants because it is a vital political factor of resistance to oppression. Culture may provide people with multiple solutions in order to fight exploitation and dislocation as well. It is as Wendy Walters refers to as “a political act” (ix) and diaspora writings especially in literature means resistance to the hegemonic movement by colonialism provides people with many subjects to think beyond nation and state (x). Within the limits of nations and states, citizenship is a legal right that should be granted to everyone, whether it is political, civil, or social. It lets individuals witness how it can be imagined through technologies, arts, literature, ... etc. It also make people recognize how migration and displacement may present various roaming forms of cultural citizenship.

## **Conclusion**

Caryl Phillips’s *A Distant Shore* is a novel of diaspora and diversity focuses on the mobility of the black people to another places to escape reality. Migration as a process has created a large number of crises such as racism, dislocation, identity loss, ... etc. In the novel, the reader is presented with an outlook of hybrid identity occurred in the postcolonial modern world. The psychic hybridity the characters suffer from is a challenge that is derived from colonialism. In the novel, the characters have experienced hybridity crises through a sense of loneliness and pain. Within this context, Phillips seems to suggest alternatives to this painful situations and dislocations, it is through the retreat into detachment of madness and death.

What is remarkable of this novel is the fact that the author speaks from a position of authority, citizenship, and inquiries of cultural hybridity, migration, and the sense of belonging. The significance of the paper lies in the fact that it introduces critical insights about Caryl Phillips’s postcolonial perspective. The study is also significant in the sense that it deals with the transformation of identity across cultures. It adds importance to the novel in the field of literature. The textual analysis of the selected text is based on the theoretical concepts utilized by the three theorists in modern colonial and postcolonial world: Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Julia Kristeva. The selected text is analyzed according to the notions of hybrid identity, diaspora, and self-other. The finding of the study is summed up in the following: Although colonialism, migration, in particular, has negative effects on individual and colonized societies, there are some positive aspects in transformation through cultures. Human rights are divested but not granted. Alienation may occur even in native countries, and language is the most distinctive feature in the process of migration.

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