

Chapter I

Caryl Phillips: Contribution to Postcolonial Diasporic Literature

In the present chapter, the first and foremost object is to provide a brief overview of postcolonial literature and biographical information of Phillips. In addition, to this it notes contemporary writers and mainly presents a brief review of Phillips' work. However, it opens with a glance in account of signposts in the novel from the beginning until now.

1.1: The Historical Overview

The English novel from its beginning in the seventeenth century up to the twenty first century has become an efficient public instrument. This genre of literature has developed through centuries, significantly commenting on the human experience. The English novel has dealt with political, social, economic and women's problems. It ventured to handle experiences of nearly all stratas of human society.

It can be noted that from the beginning to the present day number of great novelists contributed to the development of novel as a genre. Especially, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollet, and Laurence Sterne are the great legends who brought glory to the novel. Later Jane Austen with her unique style of using irony explored domestic issues and gave rise to regional novel. Further, in Victorian age Charles Dickens presented life of poor, and oppressed thus played a role as social reformer. Further, in the end of the nineteenth century, Thomas Hardy through his philosophical novels gave the English novel a new profundity and luxury. Then in the first part of the twentieth century novel as genre underwent great changes. As number of new theories were practiced which completely gave a new look to the novel. Virginia Woolf, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, Leo Tolstoy, Franz Kafka, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Doris Lessing, and Vladimir Nabokov, are some prominent novelists of the age. To summarize, it can be said that novelists tried their hands on myriad of themes

related to tragic, comic, satiric, or romantic aspect of human life. In short, the novel touched nearly each and every phase of the human world. In fact, it successfully explored inner and outer world of humanity. As a result, in the second half of the nineteenth century the novel became the most popular genre of literature leaving all other forms behind.

In the beginning of the 20th century, two devastating World Wars brought sea changes in political, economic, and social life all over the world. Before the Second World War nearly two third of the world was governed by the Britishers. The war became the root cause of declining old world and emerging the new one. These events left lasting effect nearly in the all fields. Linda Cinková ,a scholar describes it as ,“The accelerated pace of social change required British society to be re-defined much like the postwar landscape had to be reconstructed. History, culture and identity were all challenged and strained by a new world order and immigration from the former colonies.”(3) .Consequently produced cosmic change in the field of literature. As we know, that literature mirrors society and every era has its dominant trend that exposes arena of human understanding. In the same way, the era after the disintegration of the Empire is known as ‘Post-colonial’ period. Ashcroft et al. in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* mentions that, in the beginning, this term is used for “cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles”. (186) In short, in the second half of the twentieth century the literature mainly deals with some dominant themes ,that expose the European dominion and its effects on culture .

Consequently, the novels in the post war period have the world without faith and belief at its centre. English novelists responded to the striking changes in politics and society. The literary scenario was crowded with diverse tendencies each gave rise to its own literature .In 1970s, the women’s liberation movement began to find new voices in fiction and further, in 1980s started to acquire crucial role in literary state. In this age, the fiction has dominant ideas like position of women in society and sexual relationship. Some prominent male and female novelists gave fine account of women concerns in their works.

Similarly, it is important to note here that, in this period the English literature experienced a surge of new thoughts that explored the world of marginalized people. The British fiction entered into a new phase where a number of writers from India, Africa and former British colonies depicted sordid realities of the colonial life. The literature from Africa, Caribbean countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka shows homogeneity of content. Mostly this literature is known as postcolonial literature. In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, Ashcroft et al. point that common aspects the literature mentioned above display are:

...emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre .It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial.(2)

The writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, V.S.Naipaul, and Derek Walcott greatly contributed to the postcolonial literature but it was only at the end of the twentieth century ,the postcolonial writers attained proper recognition in English literature. Nick Rennison in his *Contemporary British Novelists* marks it as:

.....There have been various black and Indian English writers reproducing their experiences of colonialism but it is only in last twenty years that novelists like Caryl Phillips, Hanif Kureishi have been able to stick to their claims in the mainstream of British fiction. (xiii)

It is important to note here that finally in 1990s, postcolonialism emerged as a major critical discourse. It prominently addresses the issues like decolonization, marginalization, hybridization, and multiculturalism. The postcolonialism manifested a development of literature of the former colonies that had shared common experience of oppression, exploitation, and struggle.

According to a famous postcolonial theorist Achille Mbembe, "Postcolonialism is the dream of new kind of humanism". As he aptly remarks,

Postcolonial thinking stresses humanity in the making, the humanity that will emerge once the colonial figures of the inhuman and of racial differences have been swept away. (qtd. in Sinha)

The novelists like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, V.S.Naipaul, Nadine Gordimer ,J.M.Coetzee and Derek Walcott, Samuel Selvon, Jean Rhys , Margaret Atwood ,Michal Ondaaji , Caryl Phillips , Salman Rushdie ,Hanif Kureishi , Vikram Seth ,Anita Desai ,Andrea Levy ,Hari Kunzru, Monika Ali and Zadie Smith have dealt with the postcolonial issues.

The major concern of the researcher is to analyze the number of universal, recurring as well as pervasive diasporic themes present in Phillips the novel *Crossing the River* according to the postcolonial perspectives .

At first we will take a brief overview of major forces in creation of this great writer and his fictional and nonfictional contribution to literature.

1.2 Caryl Phillips: A Brief Biographical Sketch

As mentioned previously the contemporary postcolonial English literature has been enriched by various well-acclaimed writers. The contribution of Caryl Phillips is remarkable to the growth of the English literature. Caryl Phillips is one of the famous and eminent postcolonial British writers who belonged to the second generation of Timothy Mo, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Salman Rushdie. Further Nick Rennison rightly adds about them as “who have opened new subject for English fiction .”(136) Phillips has emerged as a versatile genius and a prolific writer. He is a playwright, an essayist, a novelist as well as an educator. These are the different facets of Phillips’ personality. He began his writing career in the 1980s and still writes with the same creative urge. He can be called one of the most recognized English novelists and essayists in the contemporary English literature. He is gifted writer who has authored nine novels, several books of nonfiction and has contributed to the domain of film, theatre and television, both drama and documentaries.

Caryl Phillips was born to Malcolm and Lillian Phillips, on 13 March 1958, in the Eastern Caribbean island of St. Kitts. His parents brought him to England when he was barely four months old. He grew up in Leeds, studied at the University of Oxford, but returned recently to St. Kitts and the Caribbean. (Of course, there are no real returns but always and only onward journeys.). He traveled extensively in the United States and Europe and visited Africa his ancestral land. Now he is settled in the United States of America.

It must be noted, that Phillips is constantly adding something new to the proliferation of black literature by exploring so far unknown and historical black diasporic experiences. It is well assumed notion that man cannot be free from the impact of social forces and life around him. The environment in which he grows conditions man's character. Similarly, Phillips was the product of racial discrimination in society. The racial experiences he has explored in his novels are the results of his first hand experiences. We learn from his life story that it has great contribution in the making of the black British writer Phillips. Therefore, there is a strong autobiographical element in his writing.

When he was barely four months old, his family shifted to England. His parents were migrated as a part of Black Caribbean labor forces, which began in 1948 and lasted until 1962. British needed skilled labor to reconstruct. Therefore, they preferred to rely on the immigrants from the former colonies of Caribbean.

In spite of their admonitions to the immigrants Britain was their mother country. Therefore, they are familiar to the language and culture of Britain. They aspired to start their second pace of lives in Britain. They were optimistic for their children and thought that their children could have greater opportunities in life as compared to their homeland. But evil of racial discrimination shattered their dreams. Their presence in the British society was supposed polluting its racial and cultural purity. The hatred and aggression towards immigrants was a lot. Phillips in his *A New World Order* points out that repeatedly they had to hear the rebuke "Go back to the jungle". Even sometimes, they had to suffer unprovoked physical attacks.

Having struggled hard, in his childhood, Phillips had faced many evils due to the racial discrimination. He and his three younger brothers were brought up in a working class neighborhood. As he belonged to black minority class had encountered many problems in Leeds. These earliest impressions on his mind kept him continually linked to the question of belonging. Phillips in his *Growing Pains* recalls an event in his school that how he was the only black boy in the class at the age of five and gazes were fixed upon him when their teacher read a tale about little black Sambo. Because of his black origin his intellectual abilities were underestimated. But his parents had taken special efforts to prove them wrong. They instilled in him the importance of education. His black skin had not made him lonely child. He was very popular in school, making friends easily. His self-confidence was raised by his participation in sports. At the age of seven, he entered in the imagery world of fiction, he received compliments for the first story he had written. Phillips concentrated on his studies and he was the first person from his Birmingham school to be accepted into Oxford University. At first, there he was interested in study of Psychology and Neurophysiology that explains his fascination of studying inner working of human soul. Finally, he completed his graduation in English language and literature.

Further, in 1979 after completing his degree, he has traveled extensively throughout the world to examine racism and to search his own place in white dominated society. During his visit to the United States, he read Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Thus he was inspired and decided to become a writer. At first, Phillips tried his hand on drama then moved to write novels.

Phillips in his *The European Tribe* points out that "the cultural confusions of being Black and British" baffled him in his early childhood.(2) Therefore, he always feels like an outsider in the White society. In *A New World Order* Phillips marks "I am thirty-two. I recognize the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong. I am of, and not of, this place"

Therefore, it is not surprising that he has focused on the inheritance of Atlantic slave trade and its cost for the African Diaspora in his writing. Consequently, he is recognized for his historical novels about the lives of Blacks in Britain. The central theme

in most of Phillips' works is the human displacement and dislocation associated with the migratory experience of blacks in both England and America. In this relation Brian Shaffer in *The encyclopedia of 20th century fiction* rightly claims, that:

His (Caryl Phillips') drama, fiction, and travel writing engage constantly with people searching for ways to belong to societies that often hostile to their presence and his work is throughout marked by his refusal to accept simple answers to the complicated questions of where and how home might be found. (287).

Mainly his thoughts are tuned by tensions of belonging and unbelongings. He was haunted by the themes of diaspora. In other words a major critic Ledent in his article in *Literary Criterion*, argues that "The diasporic pervades Phillips' writing, not only at an obvious thematic level but in his use of imaginary and structural choices." (157-169) It can be noted that through his fiction he has given voice to the marginalized who are fighting against discrimination. Moreover, they are fighting for equality in a white society and for Human Rights. However, he presents life of poor people that is spoiled by other people's greed. His writing is full of his anguish towards the British society. However, in his fiction he mainly deals with problems of Blacks and his artistic skills avoid them to be stereotyped. Besides this, he is also a well-known critic who criticizes particularly writers on multicultural and ethnic subjects. He is a born genius and his commentary on social issues has appeared in a number of academic and popular journals. He has devoted himself to writing.

To sum up it can be said that the bulk of creative output is sufficiently large to place him in the forefront of the recent black British writers. Phillips writing has been a mirror of Caribbean history. Moreover, he mainly deals with the unjust racism and its corrosive effects on the people's life. He condemned racism through his writing. His works present a historical and an international point of view on the themes of immigration (forced and other-wise), cultural and social displacement, and nostalgia for a subtle "home". He reflects his own torment through his characters often exhibit harsh struggle against everlasting sufferings.

Many critics labeled him as British writer, a black writer, a black British writer, a West Indian writer, a Caribbean writer, a black Caribbean writer and so on .Phillips steadfastly has refused the label 'black' writer. He does not believe in black or white race but only in one, human race, as whole .In *The Other Voice* , it is rightly said that Phillips “ (doesn't) feel loyalty to any race – but to the human race” . (87)

In the preface to his play *The Shelter* (1983), he said:

In Africa, I was not black. In Africa, I was a writer. In Europe, I am black. In Europe, I am a black writer. If the missionaries wish to play the game along these lines then I do not wish to be an honorary white.

Overall, the above statement clearly helps to encapsulate the motive behind his writing .However it, reveals the literal drive behind haunted writing that compels him. Besides this, it exposes the cause of his concern for the people displaced and torn from their home and homeland.

1.3 - Caryl Phillips: Works and Awards

This part will give an account of the attainment of Phillips as writer. In fact, it will note his journey of creative writing from the start to the present. In addition, it will draw attention to the honors he received.

As previously, noted Phillips started his writing career, at age of twenty for the theatre, after completing degree from Oxford University. He has been incessantly writing novels, essays, and even screenplays. Today he has achieved international status as one of the finest living writers in English .His plays consist *Strange Fruit* (1980), *Where There is Darkness* (1982), and *The Shelter* (1983). His works received literary recognition with numerous literary awards. He won the BBC Giles Cooper Award for Best Radio Play of the year for *The Wasted Years* in 1984. In 1996, he has penned a three-hour film of his own novel *The Final Passage*. He wrote a screenplay for the film *Playing Away* (1986), and his screenplay for the Merchant Ivory adaptation of V.S.Naipaul's, *The Mystic*

Masseur (2001) won the Silver Ombu for the best screenplay at Mar del Plata film festival in Argentina.

Moreover, Phillips is author of nine novels, *The Final Passage* (1985), *A State of Independence* (1986), *Higher Ground* (1989), *Cambridge* (1991), *Crossing the River* (1993), *The Nature of Blood* (1997), *A Distant Shore* (2003), *Dancing in the Dark* (2005), and *In the falling Snow* (2009).

His non-fiction consists: *The European Tribe* (1987), *The Atlantic Sound* (2000), *A New World Order* (2001), *Foreigners* (2007), and *Color Me English* (2011).

In addition to this, Phillips is editor of two anthologies: *Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging* (1997) and *The Right Set: An Anthology of Writing on Tennis* (1999). His work is translated into over dozen languages.

Caryl Phillips was the recipient of Malcom X prize for his novel *The Final Passage* (1985). For another novel *Cambridge* (1991) he received Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year in 1992 and was on the 1993 Granta list of Best of Young British Writers. His literary awards include the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a British Council Fellowship, a Lannan Foundation Fellowship, and Britain's oldest literary award, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, for *Crossing the River* that was also shortlisted for the 1993 Booker Prize. *A Distant Shore* won the 2004 Commonwealth Writers Prize; *Dancing in the Dark* won the 2006 PEN/Beyond the Margins Award.

Caryl Phillips is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He has taught at universities in Ghana, Sweden, Singapore, Barbados, India, and the United States, and in 1999 was the University of the West Indies Humanities Scholar of the Year. In 2002-3, he was a Fellow at the Centre for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. Formerly Henry R. Luce Professor of Migration and Social Order at Columbia University, currently he is Professor of English at Yale University. He is an Honorary Fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford University. Phillips is a regular contributor to

'The Guardian' and 'The New Republic'. (<http://www.carylphillips.com/biography.html>)

1.4 - Phillips Views on Literature, Life, and Major Influences:

It can be seen that Caryl Phillips who has been writing novels reflecting the harsh effects of slavery and racism in society is a significant novelist of the new generation. He is known for his ability to write novels in his own distinguished style. In this respect it is important to author statement as:

Why do I write? Because it is a way of organizing my feelings about myself and the world around me. Without writing, I fear I may metamorphose into something unpleasant. Writing feeds me literally and metaphorically. Writing provides a means by which I can sit in judgment upon myself and reach conclusions (however temporary) that enables me to shuffle towards the next day and another crisis. And then, of course, there is the technical challenge of writing. To say what I have to say, and to hope to say it in the most incisive manner. To strive towards this goal, and fail honestly, yet continue to strive. To aspire to purify the language; to desire to sharpen the blade of narrative clarity, and then strike quick unseen blows. For me, writing is all of this. And when (if) the writing no longer comes perhaps the journey will have showered me with enough knowledge so that my spirit can rest peacefully. But I doubt it. (<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/caryl-phillips>)

In an interview by Erika J. Waters when Phillips was asked for advice for writers struggling for success, he says:

They should persevere, but I don't think they should write with the understanding that they are going to make a living out of it. Not really. It

depends what you consider to be success. If success for you is only quantifiable in terms of money, then I think that probably you are doing the wrong thing. Money shouldn't be the criteria for success in writing. Unfortunately, we are in a commercially orientated world and it's a fact of life that people have to live and have to eat. They need money. I don't think that the ability to support one with writing necessarily relates directly to how good or how successful or influential a writer would be.

It clearly declares philosophy of his life.

Further, influences on the writing of Phillips are noted as follows. Phillips has been fascinated by writers like Kamau Braithwaite, V.S.Naipaul, Samuel Selvon and George Lamming. In new generation, he admires Lorna Goodison, Oliver Senior, and Earl Lovelace. His favorite Caribbean writers are Jean Rhys, A.J.Seymour, and Derek Walcott. However, the most important influence on him is James Baldwin. Phillips accepts that James Baldwin has given a sense of direction, a sense of purpose to him.

1.5 – A Brief Review of his Novels

His first novel *The Final Passage* (1985) depicts the tragic story of immigrants in 1950. Leila the protagonist is a young, mulato woman who migrates to England the mother country with her husband, Michal and baby. She wants to start new life in England. But in England racial discrimination made their life impossible. In England they always come across the boards like “No vacancies for coloreds”.

The Final Passage ends with Leila poised between two worlds. Phillips in this novel pictures their dreams to seek better fortune and dreams destroyed. The main theme is social, cultural, and psychological sufferings of migrants. The novel is divided in five parts. Phillips uses flashback technique to describe Leila's past life in Caribbean.

In the novel *A State of Independence* : (1986) Phillips portrays Bartram Francis, who returns back to home Caribbean after spending twenty years in England. He has lot of dreams about his newly independent country. However, his homecoming was not

successful .He realizes that now he is outsider in his own country .In this novel Phillips draws the picture of Caribbean at the end of colonial rule.

His next novel *Higher Ground* :(1989) has three separate stories of an African operative in the slave trade, an African-American convict during the 1960s, and Irene, a Jewish Pole exiled in London after World War II.

Rudi Williams serves life imprisonment in a Southern jail. He was brutalized by his guards and isolated from his fellow inmates. Through his letters, he writes home to explain himself, and to educate his family in the radical politics of the emerging Black Movement. These letters convey the story of young man whose refusal to bow to the system not only defends the remnants of his dignity but also seals his fate.

It is a novel in three parts that are woven together with the common thread of passion and sorrow. *Higher Ground* dramatizes a haunting triptych of the dispossessed and the abandoned, whose very humanity is being stripped away.

The novel *Cambridge*: (1991) mainly highlights on the impact of slavery .Contrast is used to focus on racism .Two main characters Cambridge and Emily are contrasted. Cambridge a black , is converted Christian during missionary voyage from England to Africa he was captured and sold as a slave to sugar plantation .Where as Emily a wealthy puritan ,English woman who visits her fathers sugar plantation in West Indies . Gender, class, and ethnicity separate Cambridge and Emily. However, common thing in them is that both are dislocated from their homelands and finally both die in foreign land.

The next novel *The Nature of Blood* (1997) points out that history repeat and these cruel histories wipe out history of humankind. *The Nature of Blood* depicts tragic story of a young woman survivor of Nazi death camp. Her life is ruined by loss of everyone she loves. Her story is mingled with the stories of others. It covers the span of 15th century Venice to present day at Israel. At the depth, there flows the story of racism and age old ethnic hatred .

The novel *A Distant Shore* :(2003) unlike the other novels of Phillips novels it is set in present .The novel shows a great change in style of writer. It pictures the world of Dorothy and Solomon .It is placed in contemporary England. Dorothy is a white English woman retired teacher, who has divorced her husband after thirty bad years of marriage. Solomon is black immigrant works as watchman. Both are outsiders living in new housing estate. The narrative dramatizes the mysterious friendship between Dorothy and Solomon. Thus, there is also parallel theme of alienation.

The novel *Dancing in the Dark*:(2005) is based on the life of Bert Williams (1874-1922) . Williams the first black entertainer in the United States who achieved the highest levels of fame and fortune .This novel dramatizes the tragic reality behind funny face of Williams. In this novel, Phillips focuses the inner conflict in the mind of Williams as the man he was and the character he played. The central issue discussed is identity crisis and racial prejudices in America.

His recent novel *In the Falling Snow* (2009) is the story of a man at a turning point in his life and of a society moving from one idea of itself to another. Keith Gordon, protagonist of the novel is the son of West Indian immigrant parents who marries a white girl. At his forties, he is divorced, jobless, and drinking to excess. He aspires to be a writer, but at this stage, he has desperate feeling that his work and he himself are no longer relevant.

Phillips uses flashback to expose memories the narrative uncovers the particulars of class, background, temperament, and desire that have brought Keith to this moment; and reveals how, often unwittingly, his wife, his son, and his father help him grasp the breadth of the changes that have occurred around him and what those changes will require of him.

1.6 -The Non-Fictional works

The European Tribe: (1987)

In an early book, *The European Tribe* (1987), Phillips has written about his perception of African Spain. In it, he remarks that,

“The most dangerous thing that we can do to ourselves is to carelessly accept a label that is offered to us by a not always generous society that seeks to reduce us to little more than one single component of our rich and complex selves.”

In *The European Tribe*, Phillips mostly points on his experience of growing up black in Europe. He explores Venice through the Shakespearean outcast Othello and views Amsterdam through the eyes of young Anne Frank.

The Atlantic Sound (2000):

The Atlantic Sound is a travel book. Phillips visits three cities involved in the ill famed Atlantic Slave trade. It has been praised for its vivid portraiture and reportage. In *The Atlantic Sound* Phillips criticizes the exploitation of the Burmese crew of the boat by the Germans and openly condemns the treatment given by British to her helpless colonial offspring back in the 1950s.

What constitute “home”? It is perceived through the perspective of Atlantic slave Trade. In this work, Phillips explained his idea of home by exploring Diaspora history that is created by dislocations.

A New World Order (2001) :

A New World Order is collection of essays. In this essay Phillips reflects on the works of influential writers like Derek Walcott, V. S. Naipaul, J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. In this essay, Phillips examines the changing world in terms of re-evaluation of identity, home, and belonging in an increasingly global world.

Phillips begins this unique collection of essays by creating his own convictions that there is a “new world order” of cultural plurality as result of refugees.

At the end of the essay, Phillips describes Africa, New York City, West Indies, and the United Kingdom in unison way:

“I recognize the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong”. (*A New World Order*: 14)

Color Me English

Phillips’ *Color Me English* is a set of 40-odd essays that are written by Phillips over the past 20 years. It contains essays and nonfictional writings that are related to literary, cultural, and autobiographical elements. , Phillips goes on to describe the experience of living and working in America, and travels in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Belgium, and France and beyond. He considers the lives and work of figures, amongst many others, including Chinua Achebe, James Baldwin, Billie Holiday and Luther Vandross, and how their experiences are refracted through the prisms of writing, music, and cinema.

However, *Color Me English* always circles back to questions of identity and belonging, and of its reverse, exclusion.

Anthologies

Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging (1997)

Phillips edited an anthology of writings written by writers born outside Britain *Extravagant Stangers*, 1997. It consists works of Ignatius Sancho, Rudyard Kipling, Samuel Selvon, and Salman Rushdie . This anthology opens in the past with the account of real experience of writers like Ignatius Sancho ,and Olaudah Equiano .It includes their struggle against question of belonging .It encourages us to rethink over our idea of “English Literature”and our considerations of “Britishness .” (<http://www.the-caribbean-writer.org/index.php?>)

The Right Set: An Anthology of Writing on Tennis (1999).

The game of tennis, genteel and volatile by turns, has attracted the attention of some of the finest writers perhaps because, more than in most sports, there are always other considerations present on court: politics, class, sex, money, gender, and race. At a time when the game is changing, with more money on offer, with players like Tim Henman and Venus Williams assuming the status of pop stars, and with an ever-increasing world-wide audience, *The Right Set* explores the past, present and future of tennis, with a wide-ranging selection of pieces from novelists, journalists and, more importantly, the players themselves.

Foreigners:

Foreigners is a reportage that tells us heartbreaking stories of three black people. The stories deeply present the place and role of the foreigners in English society. (Alternately known as *Foreigners: Three English Lives*.) At the core, again, there is theme of race identity and belonging, which is Phillips preoccupation. Phillips uses a distinct style.

This chapter discusses historical context of the postcolonial literature. Further, it presents a brief biographical sketch of Phillips. Besides this, it offers an account of Caryl Phillips' contribution to postcolonial literature. In brief, this chapter provides insight into postcolonial diaspora literature and traces autobiographical elements into his writings. The next chapter will discuss postcolonialism and diaspora in detail.