

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
KATEDRA ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY

Caribbean Experience in Novels by Caryl Phillips

Diplomová práce

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Olomouc 2014

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma *Caribbean Experience in Novels by Caryl Phillips* vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucí práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne

Podpis:

Poděkování

Chtěla bych poděkovat paní Mgr. Pavlíně Flajšarové, Ph.D. za odborné vedení práce, poskytování cenných rad a materiálových podkladů k práci a čas, který mi věnovala.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the experience of Caribbean migrants in Britain by exploring Caryl Phillips's first two novels: *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence*. Both novels are concerned with Caribbean migrants and their experience either in Britain or back on their island of birth. They mainly deal with issues of identity and belonging. The critical perspective is historical-biographical. It is necessary to introduce the history of Caribbean migration to Britain to be able to understand what migrants had to experience and what their situation is like nowadays. It is also important to present the British writer of Caribbean origin – Caryl Phillips, whose works address Caribbean experience in Britain, and to define his place in Anglophone Caribbean literature as he has been selected as its representative.

The concern of chapter two is the history of immigration from the Anglophone Caribbean to Britain. It primarily focuses on the post-WW2 period during which Britain experienced a massive influx of immigrants, especially from its former colonies. Most migrants came in search of better opportunities for themselves as well as for their children. Moreover, they had thought of Britain as of their “mother country”. They soon discovered that the reality significantly differed from their expectations. They were systematically discriminated in all areas of their lives and they were constantly exposed to racial prejudice which gradually turned into verbal and physical violence. During decades of racial riots West Indian migrants were struggling for recognition and integration. In the end, Britain had to accept the fact that it has become a multicultural society and that the mingling of various cultures may be beneficial after all.

Chapter three tries to define and clarify the body of Caribbean literature written in English. It traces its origins and follows its development particularly throughout the twentieth century. With the arrival of huge numbers of West Indian migrants in Britain after WW2, a considerable amount of writers have emerged who wanted to share their experience and make the British pay more attention to the status and situation of migrants. One part of the chapter is also devoted to the Caribbean poetry in English which is particularly interesting for its use of calypso rhythms and creole languages. Last but not least, this chapter introduces the persona of Caryl Phillips, a young and very prolific writer addressing the issues of identity, displacement, colonialism, racism and oppression of other kinds in his fiction as well as non-

fiction works. He is one of a few authors of Caribbean origin who has achieved a wide acclaim and who has a stable place in British mainstream literature. He has achieved popularity and fame not only by original subject matter of his works, but also by the use of original formal devices. To be able to capture the diversity of the Caribbean islands as well as their inhabitants, he often uses fragmented narrative techniques with frequent flashbacks. His own extraordinary position enables him to adopt both the Caribbean and the British viewpoint.

In the final chapter, Phillips's first two novels are analysed: *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence*. In these two novels Phillips's dual perspective is very well visible. While *The Final Passage* follows Leila's and her family's migration from the Caribbean to Britain, *A State of Independence* deals with the return migration of Bertram after having spent twenty harsh years in Britain. While Leila faces discrimination and antipathy in the British society, Bertram experiences contempt and refusal in his homeland. Both protagonists are uprooted and they struggle all the time to find a place they could call "home".

It can be deduced from Phillips's essays and interviews that he introduces numerous (semi)-autobiographical elements in his novels as well as plays. He also emphasizes the impact of one's past and roots on their present life. His first two novels can be therefore regarded as mirror images of one another. Phillips manages very well to demonstrate what it is like to be a coloured person in the predominantly racist British society.

2. HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION FROM THE CARIBBEAN

2.1 WEST INDIES UNDER BRITISH COLONIAL RULE; THE INDEPENDENCE

In this chapter, I would like to look briefly at the history of the British West Indies and how these islands gained independence after the decolonization of the British Empire. A larger part will be dedicated to the post-war migration from the Caribbean to Great Britain and the focus of the last part will be on the Caribbean community in Britain, its distribution, characteristics, culture but also the problems they have to face as an ethnic minority.

British West Indies are the states in the Caribbean sea which were previously under British control and most of which are currently independent countries. The majority of them have also decided to join the Commonwealth of Nations after they gained independence. Historically, these islands were grouped into: the British Leeward Islands, the British Windward Islands and Jamaica with its dependencies. There have been continuous attempts at creating federations and unions of which the most famous was the West Indian Federation. However, it did not survive long, it only lasted from 1958-62. Its purpose was to form a single state and become independent of Britain. Unfortunately, it collapsed and the states had to continue their struggle for independence each on their own. The first island to separate from Britain was Jamaica in 1962 and the last one was Saint Kitts and Nevis in 1983. There are certain countries which are still under British rule in the present, they are so called British overseas territories.

Before moving to the Caribbean migration, we have to introduce the British colonization of the West Indies, the decline of the British Empire, its subsequent decolonization and the foundation of the Old and the New Commonwealth. The area of the West Indies started to interest the colonial powers basically since the voyage of Christopher Columbus at the end of the 15th century. The islands were gradually colonized by the British, the French, the Dutch and the Spanish. The British colonization of the West Indies took place during the 17th and the 18th century and Britain introduced on the colonized islands both classical and slave trade. The slaves were mainly brought from Africa to work on the West Indian sugar plantations. Slavery was finally abolished by the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833. As a result of the fierce competition among the European imperial powers, the First World War broke out and it caused the decline of the British Empire which gradually lost almost all its colonies. The decolonization happened in two main phases: between the two world wars

and after the Second World War. The first phase involved the so called Old Commonwealth countries, such as Canada or Australia, which have a strong cultural link to Britain. The so called New Commonwealth countries gained independence during the second phase and they denote the recently decolonized countries such as those in the Indian subcontinent or the Caribbean. Nowadays, the Commonwealth of Nations represents a loose association of the United Kingdom in charge together with its former colonies which have voluntarily decided to join in and whose membership ensures their equal status.

During the British colonial rule, several anti-imperialist movements emerged as a reaction to the British domination and cultural oppression of the West Indian population. “As elsewhere, colonization in the Caribbean did not only entail the economic, political and military domination of the indigenous and colonized population, it also involved a sometimes overt, but often surreptitious process of cultural oppression.”¹ The African community in Britain, including the Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Americans, launched the Pan-Africanist movement which struggled against imperialism, racial discrimination and social injustice. They organised numerous congresses of which the most significant was the Manchester congress which was “a landmark in the history of decolonization” because it “served as the pace-maker of decolonization in Africa and in the British West Indies.”² The whole movement aimed at eradicating the colour bar which denotes the widespread discrimination of ethnic minorities in Britain in the inter-war period. It involved “ [...] the refusal of lodgings, refusal of service in cafés, refusal of admittance to dance halls, etc., shrugs, nods, whispers, comments, etc., in public, in the street, in trams and in buses.”³ However, the most violent racial riots were yet to come as a reaction to the massive influx of immigrants into Britain after WW2.

2.2 WEST INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO BRITAIN

The crucial moment in the history of post-war immigration from the West Indians to Britain was the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush in Tilbury on the 22 June 1948. The ship brought

¹ Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London: Verso, 1993), 233.

² Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 351.

³ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 356.

the first considerable group of 492 Jamaicans and thousands of others were to follow in the next decade. “The Caribbean had a long tradition of migration – to other islands, to central America, to the United States – in search of work; but in 1952 the US McCarran-Walter Act restricted immigration into the United States from many areas, including the West Indies.”⁴ Therefore, Britain became the most frequent destination of immigrants, together with other European countries such as France or the Netherlands (the former colonial powers besides Britain). Although there were several factors which provoked and encouraged West Indian migration to Britain (such as poverty and population growth on the Caribbean islands), the decisive factor was British severe labour shortage in particular branches of industry such as: transport, nursing and others, which led to the recruitment of workers from its former colonies. “The newcomers to Britain had answered the country’s “call” for manual labour to re-build its towns and cities – particularly in construction, transport and nursing – after the wartime devastation.”⁵ Their biggest influx took place in the 1950s and 1960s, which means in the post-war period. The reasons for migration on the side of the West Indians were mostly these: after the war, the cost of living rose considerably in the British West Indies, the wages were low, the level of unemployment high, there was a constant lack of opportunities, especially for young people. Britain represented hope for them. Generally, the reasons for migration were economic and social and we therefore call these migrants “labour migrants”. The primary migrants were later (mainly during the 1960s and 1970s) joined by their wives and children (the so called dependants). The children, who are already born to their parents in Britain, are referred to as second generation immigrants.

Despite the fact that the immigrants came to Britain full of optimism and illusions, the reality appeared to be totally the opposite of their expectations. The most serious problems they had to face were omnipresent discrimination and racism (in the form of verbal abuse but also physical violence). Not only did they have to accept a lower job status (they were generally offered jobs the local white people did not want to do) but they were also disadvantaged in the domain of education, housing and social life in general. Although they

⁴ Peter Fryer, 373.

⁵ Clayton Goodwin, “UK It has not been all milk and honey,” *New African* 473 (2008): 82, accessed June 25, 2013, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=b8f56897-0089-4576-b647-a909a92386de%40sessionmgr104&hid=103>.

were officially British citizens, they were regarded as aliens and even as a threat to the homogenous white British population, they were simply too visible and too numerous. It was them who were to blame for all the problems which occurred in Britain such as: unemployment and poor housing conditions. The prejudice against black people was widespread and it resulted in several years of racial riots and violence but also in legislative acts restricting the entry of immigrants into Britain. To make matters worse, racism became a part of the programme of certain political parties and groups of which the fascists posed the biggest threat to the black people in Britain. Arson, mobbing, assault and house raids were commonplace throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

2.3 RACIAL RIOTS

While West Indian migrants' economic reception was fairly smooth, their social absorption was exactly the opposite.

Economically, the movement has been almost wholly beneficial to the country; the movement has been dominated by the demand for labour and the economic absorption of West Indians has been smooth. Socially, the absorption of the West Indian population has not been as easy: the country's housing and educational facilities have been chronically overloaded and the arrival of a visible minority in some areas of long-standing social difficulty has given rise to friction.⁶

Black people were generally seen as a problem while the real problem was the prejudice and intolerance of the white population. What reinforced this view and caused the racial hatred to spread all over Britain was the governmental anti-immigration policy that was adopted. This legislation meant to limit or even stop completely the entry of immigrants from particular areas such as the British West Indies or the Indian subcontinent. Simply said, once the immigrants filled the gaps in the labour market, they were no longer needed and wanted and they had to be got rid of. "Step by step, racism was institutionalized, legitimized, and nationalized."⁷ The British immigration policy that can be called discriminatory legislation will be dealt with in the subsequent part. The racial riots that were taking place during the 1960s and 1970s are often referred to as "nigger-hunting". This label seems to be apt if we

⁶ G. C. K. Peach, "West Indian Migration to Britain," *International Migration Review* 1 (1967): 44, accessed March 23, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3002807>.

⁷ Peter Fryer, 381.

consider what most of the black settlers had to go through. In 1958 in Nottingham anti-black rioting broke out and attacks on black people were becoming more frequent. The local politicians showed no sympathy for the victims, on the contrary, they reacted by claiming that no more black people should be allowed into the country. They shared the opinions with the majority of the British white population in that they perceived the black immigrants as a burden and a threat to their peaceful lives. Not even by the police could the desperate immigrants look for support and protection. The police was also biased against them and they even sided with the fascists and white hooligans known as the “teddy boys”. Moreover, when some disturbances occurred, the police denied that there could have been any racist motive behind it and very often the victims themselves got arrested while the white attackers went free. As one of the second generation immigrants admitted:

Police relations with the black communities will never be improved while the police are seen by blacks as the agents of a white racist society, while blacks are not treated as fully fledged members of British Society and accorded the same rights, equalities, and opportunities.⁸

Black people were permanently in suspicion; even the judges were biased, therefore the black people gradually decided to take justice in their own hands. Another area affected by racial riots was North Kensington and its surrounding districts, an area called “Notting Hill”. Black and white working-class families lived in overcrowded slums there. “The fascists blamed black people exclusively for the overcrowding and other bad conditions that afflicted everyone who lived in north Kensington.”⁹ Gangs of white youth went nigger-hunting. “On weekend evenings in particular, gangs of “teddy boys” cruised the streets looking for West Indians, Africans, or Asians.”¹⁰ The black settlers were under permanent pressure and even in fear of their lives. As one West Indian admitted, “A black man’s treated worse than a dog here. They watch you wherever you go. You daren’t go out in the evening – it’s a prison, this country.”¹¹ Attacks on black people spread to other London districts as well. “Outside

⁸ Peter Fryer, 391.

⁹ Peter Fryer, 378.

¹⁰ Peter Fryer, 378.

¹¹ Peter Fryer, 379.

London, an identical pattern emerged in virtually every area of black settlement.”¹² In the course of the decade from 1958 to 1968 racism became a part of the national politics. Enoch Powell is considered to have been the leader of the British racists. He spread racial intolerance and hatred all over the country by means of his persuasive speeches. Black people, who were under constant attack and who found the situation unbearable, reacted by forming black militant organizations so that they would be able to defend themselves. A well-known organization of this kind was the Black People’s Alliance (BPA).

As far as the second generation immigrants (the settlers’ children) are concerned, they continued in the tradition of militancy, resistance and struggle. As one of them said, “We will not put up with racist behaviour. Rather than acquiesce we will react. Through our understanding of the British way of life we will be better equipped than our parents to organize constructive rebellion.”¹³ Although they were born, brought up and educated in Britain, they were not spared from racism and discrimination similarly to their parents’ generation.

Many white people complacently assume that black people born, brought up, and educated in Britain receive equal treatment to white British people in every respect. They are mistaken. In the key areas of employment, housing, and education, those born in Britain of Asian and West Indian parents face – as their parents have faced since arriving here – a very substantial amount of unfair discrimination.¹⁴

In the 1970s the oppression of the black population did not liberate and the police-black relations were not getting any better, therefore the youth decided to take control of the situation and take a radical step. “After an entire decade of police harassment, aimed at suppressing black resistance, black and white youth together, in the summer of 1981, set Britain’s inner cities ablaze.”¹⁵ These riots seemed to be a logical reaction to several years of oppression, fear, violent attacks and widespread racism. “The rebellion of black youth in the inner cities was the logical and, as is now clear, inevitable response to racist attacks. It was

¹² Peter Fryer, 380.

¹³ Peter Fryer, 390.

¹⁴ Peter Fryer, 387.

¹⁵ Peter Fryer, 395.

the culmination of years of harassment.”¹⁶ The black people simply wanted to show that they had had enough of all this treatment. These riots were the most powerful in British main slave ports: London, Bristol and Liverpool. “There, if anywhere, the persistent bullying of black people as bound, sooner or later, to provoke rebellion.”¹⁷ The scope and power of the riots surprised everyone including the young rebels themselves. They realized that if they unite against the white oppressors, they will be likely to defeat them. Although these riots involving violence and arson were condemned publicly by the politicians, the police have learnt that the intelligence, power and determination of the black population should not be underestimated.

2.4 BRITISH IMMIGRATION POLICY

As far as British immigration policy is concerned, it has become increasingly restricting since 1962. In 1948 the Nationality Act was passed which “[...] had granted United Kingdom citizenship of Britain’s colonies and former colonies. Their British passports gave them the right to come to Britain and stay here for the rest of their lives.”¹⁸ However, they were far from being welcome there. Once the gap in the labour market had been filled, the black immigrants became superfluous and there was a strong tendency to restrict or even prevent further immigration from certain areas. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act represented the turning point in the British race relations since the immigrants obtained a permanent status of second-class citizens, therefore they had no longer an equal status to the white British citizens. Moreover, it virtually ended free movement from the Caribbean to Britain. That is why prior to 1962 there has been a massive influx of West Indian migrants to Britain. “Awareness of the impending restrictions led to a dramatic increase in annual entries in the years preceding 1962.”¹⁹ The 1962 Act also introduced the system of employment vouchers. “Part of the government controls under the Act was that Commonwealth immigrants coming to the U.K. for the purpose of working had first to secure an employment

¹⁶ Peter Fryer, 395.

¹⁷ Peter Fryer, 399.

¹⁸ Peter Fryer, 373.

¹⁹ Margaret Byron and Stephanie Condon, “A Comparative Study of Caribbean Return Migration from Britain and France: Towards a Context-Dependent Explanation,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21 (1996): 93, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/622927>.

voucher.”²⁰ In order to reduce the number of migrants coming to Britain and settling there, the rate of issue of these vouchers decreased every year. In 1968 another Commonwealth Immigration Act was issued and it restricted the entry of Kenyan Asians holding British passports while white ex-colonials could enter freely. Obviously, this act was clearly discriminatory and the discrimination was based on the colour of their skin. Racism thus became official which further reinforced the racist attitudes of the majority of Britain’s white population. The 1971 Immigration Act practically ended all primary immigration. “The only black people now permitted to enter Britain were those who, under a kind of contract-labour system, were allowed to come to do a specific job for a limited period.”²¹ All this anti-immigration legislation contributed to the racial tension between the white and black British population with the latter being subject to all kinds of abuse, from verbal abuse to physical violence.

2.5 RETURN MIGRATION OF WEST INDIANS

An interesting phenomenon related to Caribbean migrants is the return migration which describes the process of return to the country of origin. Return migration tends to be permanent and irreversible as opposed to transnational mobility which refers to continual and temporary migration between Britain and the country of origin. In general, the movement from the Caribbean tends to be long-term and one-directional. Return migrants to the Caribbean generally fall into two categories: the pre-retirement returnees and the retirement returnees. “On the one hand, there are people who return prior to retirement, usually to earn a living in the region, and, on the other those who return at retirement.”²² The differences between the two categories are mainly based on the length of their stay in Britain.

“Short-stay” migrants tended to return within fourteen years and were back in the Caribbean by the early 1970s. Meanwhile, “long-stay” migrants had spent, on average,

²⁰ G. C. K. Peach, 40.

²¹ Peter Fryer, 385.

²² Margaret Byron and Stephanie Condon, 97.

over thirty years in Britain. The return of “long-stay” migrants is a phenomenon of the late 1980s and the 1990s.²³

“The majority of returnees appear to delay return until they retire and their pensions provide a secure income in the Caribbean.”²⁴ On the other hand, the pre-retirement returnees often come back “home” with the vision of establishing their own businesses. There are various factors affecting the return migration, especially the economic and socio-cultural ones which seem to be inseparable. One of the chief economic factors is the cost of living back in the Caribbean compared to that in Britain. The housing type is closely related. There has been inflation in land prices in the Caribbean since the 1980s, therefore those who had not invested in housing in the preceding decades or those who owned property neither in Britain nor in the Caribbean, found it extremely hard to return back home and settle there. “As most returnees need to convert either property or savings in Britain into homes and perhaps businesses in the Caribbean, it is likely that property owners will predominate among returnees.”²⁵ The income upon return also plays a crucial role in return migration. The migrants are expected to be wealthy after so many years spent abroad, however, the reality is often exactly the opposite. Since in most cases they had to settle for a lower job status and they often had to send remittances to their families and relatives left behind, they did not manage to save enough to ensure a secure life back in their country of origin. They also learnt that many of those who had stayed in the Caribbean built large houses and seem to be prosperous. Social networks also influence the return of migrants. Those who left their relatives behind feel a considerably stronger tendency to return than those who have set up their families in Britain. This return migration is demonstrated in Caryl Phillips’ novel *A State of Independence* in the main character of Bertram Francis. The Caribbean experience in novels by Phillips will be the subject of the following chapters.

In the next part, the various aspects and characteristics of the British Caribbean community will be explored, including the distribution of the Caribbean population in Britain, housing, employment, education but also their culture and integration into the white population.

²³ Margaret Byron and Stephanie Condon, 97.

²⁴ Margaret Byron and Stephanie Condon, 99.

²⁵ Margaret Byron and Stephanie Condon, 98.

2.6 WEST INDIAN COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

In this part the socio-demographic profile of Britain's black population will be presented with respect to the white population. A brief comparison of the component ethnic groups within the black population will be included. To begin with, British black people are substantially disadvantaged in the chief domains of employment, housing and education.

2.6.1 EMPLOYMENT

“The relative concentration of black people in urban areas of Britain has meant that the problems affecting them are often those affecting urban areas in general.”²⁶ Among the most serious issues belong especially unemployment and poor housing conditions. As for the ethnic minority unemployment rates, they tend to be considerably higher than those of the white population. A phenomenon typical for the black people is self-employment being the most frequent in Asian communities. Generally, British black minorities tend to be over-concentrated in semi- or unskilled work and they also earn much less than their white counterparts. Black people also find it very difficult to get a job and almost impossible to get a job corresponding to their qualification and work experience. For the young black people, the situation seems even worse. “To find work, if you are a black school-leaver, you have to be more than talented: you have to be lucky.”²⁷ To sum up, black immigrants in Britain are forced to accept jobs below the level of their qualifications, they often face unattractive conditions (such as hard manual labour, shift work) but they get lower wages than the white employees.

The minority groups are more vulnerable to unemployment than whites; they are concentrated within lower job levels in a way that cannot be explained by lower academic or job qualifications; within broad categories of jobs they have lower earnings than whites, [...] they tend to shiftwork, which is generally thought to be undesirable, [...] they have to make about twice as many applications as whites before finding a job.²⁸

²⁶ Shamit Sagar, *Race and Politics in Britain* (London:Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 60.

²⁷ Peter Fryer, 388.

²⁸ Peter Fryer, 388.

2.6.2 HOUSING

As far as housing of black immigrants is concerned, “Disadvantage is reflected in the type of tenure, size, age and conditions of housing [...]”²⁹ Although “no coloured” tags no longer appear in landlords’ advertisements during the 1970s, black people still suffer overcrowding and lack of various housing amenities. “Across a whole range of amenities often thought of as essential in the modern age – separate bathrooms, running hot water, indoor WCs, and so on – black households on average fared worse than white ones.”³⁰ When it comes to the tenure type, West Indians are the least likely to be owner-occupiers. On the other hand, they are mostly council tenants unlike Asians who often own the house/flat which they occupy, however, this housing is generally of very poor quality. To summarize, black people live in dwellings which are smaller, inferior in quality and with fewer amenities than their white counterparts.

Finally, the cumulative effect of several factors such as difficulty in securing loans, low wages, high unemployment, and discrimination by banks and building societies, has helped to push many West Indians into poor quality public housing and Asians into poor quality private housing.³¹

As we can see, the tenure type does not always reflect the quality of housing. Moreover, these poor housing conditions often lead to hygiene and health problems, especially in small children, and they have a negative impact on the well-being of the black settlers and their families.

2.6.3 EDUCATION

In terms of education, children of the black settlers are generally and probably subconsciously categorized as under-achieving. “Much of the discrimination experienced by black pupils stems, indeed, from a prejudice that is not merely un verbalized but unconscious.”³² They tend

²⁹ Shamit Saggat, 61.

³⁰ Shamit Saggat, 62.

³¹ Shamit Saggat, 62.

³² Peter Fryer, 389.

to be classed as educationally subnormal, teachers have low expectations from them and therefore few black students continue their studies after secondary school.

West Indian children were constantly and right through the schooling system treated as uneducable and as having “unrealistic aspirations” together with a low IQ. Consequently, they were “banded” into classes for backward children or dumped in ESN (educationally subnormal) schools and forgotten.³³

This discouraging and even discriminatory treatment that the children of West Indian immigrants received in British schools closed the door to university education and subsequent skilled work to many young people and it must have provoked in them a feeling of injustice and bitter disappointment. Having to face discrimination since the very childhood, the second and third generation of black immigrants can hardly ever get to believe in justice and tolerance in the British society.

2.6.4 WAVES OF WEST INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO BRITAIN (OVERVIEW)

The immigration from the West Indies to Britain took place in several phases. The first Caribbean to arrive in Britain were slaves imported to become servants in British households, this phase happened mainly in the 18th century. In 1833 slavery was abolished all through the British Empire, therefore the slave trade and slave import came to an end. The West Indian immigrants who arrived in Britain during the 19th century were mainly seamen, students and entertainers. When the First World War broke out, black immigrants were needed especially in war industry and merchant navy, however, as soon as the war finished, they often became redundant and lost their jobs. Between the two world wars the racial hatred of the white population toward the black immigrants originated due to the economic crisis and consequent unemployment and lack of housing. The major phase of the West Indian immigration, however, took place after the Second World War and it started with the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948 with about five hundred West Indians on board. The biggest influx happened between 1955 and 1962. These immigrants came to Britain with the intention of settling permanently there. Their most frequent destinations were major cities (with London

³³ Peter Fryer, 389.

as the top destination), seaports and industrial cities such as Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Liverpool.

2.6.5 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION, AGE AND GENDER

This brief part will show the statistical data of the distribution, age and gender of Britain's black population, and West Indian in particular.

“The geographic distribution of the black population has tended to reflect the patterns established following the early phases of immigrant settlement during the 1950s and 1960s.”³⁴ Therefore, Britain's black population is highly concentrated in the big cities, with the majority of them residing directly in the capital. In the South-east region the percentage of ethnic minority population exceeds 50 per cent, the West Midlands region follows with about 17 per cent.³⁵ The geographic distribution reflects job availability at the time of the immigrants' original settlement. In case of the Caribbean community, two thirds live in the South-east. “Moreover, when it comes to the region's Caribbean-origin population, getting on for nine in ten are Londoners [...]”³⁶ The first districts to house the Caribbean were Brixton and Notting Hill. In general, West Indian migrants settled in larger cities and in cities with decreasing white population for which reason they are often referred to as a replacing population.

The age structure of the black population differs considerably from that of the white population. Black people living in Britain tend to be much younger than their white counterparts. There are about 70 per cent of the ethnic minority people who are under 35 years old, that means it is generally the child-bearing population. If high birth rate is added, the growth in the number of the black population is likely to occur. However, the West Indian community seems to move in the opposite direction in that their size is steadily decreasing. Interestingly, their growth pattern is comparable to that of the white population and it makes the West Indian community an exception among other ethnic minority groups where the growth in size is quite dramatic. This issue is a relatively complex one, to be able to account for the increase or decrease in the population size, we need to consider birth rates, mortality

³⁴ Shamit Saggar, 51.

³⁵ See Shamit Saggar, 53.

³⁶ Shamit Saggar, 55.

rates as well as the level of continuing secondary immigration. In case of West Indians, their birth rates are relatively low, thus comparable to the birth rates of the white population, and return migration to the Caribbean is probably more frequent than continuing immigration to Britain these days.

In terms of the male-female ratio, even nowadays the black population contains slightly more men than women. “Partly as a continuing consequence of early migration patterns which mainly involved young males, most ethnic groups within the black population today contain a slightly larger number of men than women.”³⁷ Again, the West Indian community is an exception in this respect. Similarly to the white population, women slightly prevail among British West Indians. For every 1,000 West Indian females there are only 940 males.³⁸ The preponderance of men has been gradually reduced mainly due to marriage and family reunification.

2.6.6 CARIBBEAN CULTURE IN BRITAIN

The culture of Caribbean migrants in Britain has been, by its very nature, complex and continually changing. Caribbean culture as we see it in Britain today emerged in response to two powerful forces. First, there was the need for migrants to adapt to their changed circumstances. They had arrived in Britain to be faced with a wholly different way of life. Secondly was the need to preserve their already established identity.³⁹

As the number of West Indian immigrants has grown considerably since the Second World War, their community has created a distinct culture. Although the two cultures tend to blend, there were huge differences in the beginning that the West Indians found difficult to get used to. They stemmed from the different climate but also from the high degree of industrialization and urbanization of Britain compared to mainly agricultural and rural West Indian society in the Caribbean. However, these cultural differences were easier to overcome than

³⁷ Shamit Saggar, 59.

³⁸ See Shamit Saggar, 59.

³⁹ Mike Phillips, “Culture and Festivals,” accessed June 25, 2013, <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/caribbean/culture/culture.htm>.

discrimination and racism that the black immigrants had to face from the side of the white population. Fortunately, many migrants achieved success as artists and entertainers. Nowadays, we call their culture Black British since “[...] it draws its identity both from the migrant background and the specific experiences of living in Britain and becoming part of the mix of cultures in the UK.”⁴⁰

In terms of religion, a vast majority of immigrant coming from the British West Indies profess Christian religion. However, the British churches did not offer the same kind of atmosphere they had been used to. Therefore, they established a network of Black churches where they organized regular Sunday gatherings which helped to unite the communities. They also developed their own Black church culture including the traditional gospel choirs.

There is also a long tradition of carnivals and festivals that the black immigrants have brought with them to Britain. They have managed to enrich the British culture with many unusual customs. The festivals involve dressing up in bright costumes, playing music loud and public dancing. While in the beginning, festivals served as a means of protesting and demonstrating against racism and discrimination, they currently represent important and fascinating events which are a significant part of the British culture. The most well-known festival held annually at the end of August is the Notting Hill Carnival. Even the West Indian communities outside London organize their own festivals.

“Music, which most people associate with Caribbean culture is a powerful tool in assembling and reinforcing migrant identity.”⁴¹ The typical Caribbean music genres are: calypso, rhythm ‘n’ blues, ska and reggae. Most of these originated in Jamaica and were brought to Britain by migrants. At first, they organized private blues parties before their music became popular in Britain and started to be played on the radio as well as in clubs. This popularization was mainly the merit of Bob Marley whose charismatic personality and reggae music contributed to the development of Black British music industry. The popularity of the Caribbean music was growing especially among the British white youth and it is currently an inseparable part of the British cultural life.

⁴⁰ Mike Phillips, “Culture and Festivals.”

⁴¹ Mike Phillips, “Culture and Festivals.”

As far as the cuisine is concerned, “Caribbean food is an eclectic mix drawn from European cuisine, mingled with Asian, African, native South American and Caribbean elements. It had an immense diversity of ingredients and varying styles of cooking.”⁴² Due to a strong tradition of fishing, the Caribbean like both preserved and fresh fish. Among their favourite food belong root vegetables, fruit, herbs and they are also attached to hot peppers and fried and roasted dishes. A few businesses have been established in London to satisfy the demand for familiar product and dishes. These are offered most frequently on the market (e.g. the famous Brixton market). The original businesses have developed into a whole food industry. However, it seems that the tradition of the Caribbean cuisine is not as strong and as deeply rooted in Britain as for instance the Indian or Chinese cuisine.

“Caribbean artists, musicians, writers and journalists have always been an important part of the migrant population and made a valuable contribution to British and European cultural life. [...] However, it is novelists, poets and filmmakers from the Caribbean who have probably had the greatest impact on the British cultural scene, many recording the shape and style of Caribbean life and its encounter with Britain.”⁴³ The Caribbean prose and poetry, with special focus on the British novelist of West Indian origin - Caryl Phillips, will be dealt with in the third chapter.

2.6.7 CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE IN BRITAIN

This subchapter will be devoted to the issue of assimilation and identity of Caribbean migrants, especially the second generation. The key question is to what extent they integrate into the British society and adopt its language, culture and values, and to what extent they maintain connections with their or their parents’ homeland in case of second generation migrants. In general, first generation black migrants did not manage to integrate very well into the white society due to discrimination and racism in all the domains of their lives. However, since the second generation is born, brought up and educated in Britain, the assumption is that they would assimilate more easily and they would not maintain connections with their parents’ homeland to the same extent as their parents. Obviously, there are numerous factors affecting these links. “Factors such as work, marriage, children, family all influence the level

⁴² Mike Phillips, “Culture and Festivals.”

⁴³ Mike Phillips, “Culture and Festivals.”

of transnationalism across the life-course stage.”⁴⁴ If we consider the ethnic identity and the sense of belonging of these second generation migrants, they seem to be a sort of cultural hybrids blending their parents’ cultural heritage and the newly adopted British culture.

The return migration of the second generation does not seem to be a rare phenomenon. Moreover, many of them possess dual-citizenship which enables them to move freely between the two countries. The question is what makes these young migrants return to their parents’ country of origin. “Coupled with regular visits to the ancestral homeland from a young age, regular and sustained contact with remaining family members via e-mail, internet and phone have all acted as motivators for return migration.”⁴⁵ It is interesting to consider the extent to which these return visits influence and maybe even provoke return migration. “[...] these regular return visits back home allow migrants to maintain links with their ancestral homeland, which in turn aids their return home and social integration.”⁴⁶

What is even more interesting is the difference in treatment of first versus second generation migrants by the British society. Do the children of primary migrants face the same problems as their parents once did?

Britain in the 21st century is very different to the Britain of the late 1970s, 1980s and even early- and mid-1990s. More than a decade of New Labour policies, particularly, the advance of multiculturalism, has shaped Britain in a way that arguably is more open to ethnic minorities, social cohesion and dual nationalism and identity.⁴⁷

Although British white population was hostile to the black immigrants in the decades following the end of the Second World War, nowadays second and third generation West Indian immigrants are well-established in London. Many Caribbean Londoners have even achieved high positions in business and public life. The Caribbean community influences

⁴⁴ Ellen Quirke, Robert B. Potter and Dennis Conway, “Transnationalism and the Second-Generation Caribbean Community in Britain,” *Geographical Paper* 187 (May, 2009): 12, accessed May 25, 2013, <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/geog/GP187.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Ellen Quirke, “Transnationalism,” 15.

⁴⁶ Ellen Quirke, 15-16.

⁴⁷ Ellen Quirke, 25.

considerably London's social and cultural life. "A host of actors, musicians, presenters, sportspeople and politicians who are second and third generation Caribbeans, are dynamic role-models for future generations."⁴⁸ Sport and music represent the major areas of successful achievement for the young black migrants. Moreover, the distinct music culture has helped to create their new identity. This achievement may be partly explained by their higher aspirations compared to the parental generation.

Therefore, our original assumption that the second generation migrants would assimilate more easily than their parents and that they would not have the same tendency to maintain links with their relatives and friends who stayed in the West Indies has proven to be only partially correct. It really seems that the young black settlers do not experience the same degree of discrimination and that they have better opportunities. On the other hand, it appears that the return migration or at least the return visits are still quite frequent among the second generation. It is a very complex issue and many factors come into play such as family ties, professional success in Britain, the level of integration, the sense of belonging, since many young West Indians still feel torn between their two nationalities and identities. The phenomenon which, however, reinforces the British identity is the inter-ethnic marriage which is quite frequent compared to other ethnic minorities. "The 2001 Census showed that in Britain, 29 per cent of Black Caribbean men and 20 per cent of Black Caribbean women were in inter-ethnic marriages."⁴⁹ This indicates that the British Caribbean community succeeds quite well in their social integration.

In conclusion, the aim of this chapter was to present the West Indian community living in London and in other parts of Britain. It has been described how and when migrants from the Caribbean arrived in Britain, what their motivation for immigration was and how they were received by the white population. Their brief socio-demographic profile has been provided and compared to that of other British ethnic minorities. A considerable part of this chapter was dedicated to the issue of discrimination which rendered the black settlers' integration more difficult and often painful. The situation for the second and the following generation black migrants (the primary migrants' descendants) seems to be generally more

⁴⁸ "Caribbean London," accessed June 23, 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/caribbean_london_feature.shtml.

⁴⁹ Ellen Quirke, 30.

favourable. Moreover, the distinct Caribbean culture has become an important part of the British culture. To sum up, this chapter has tried to demonstrate what it was and is like to be a black person in multiracial Britain.

3. CARYL PHILIPS AND HIS WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

In this chapter, the focus will be on the body of post-WWII Anglophone Caribbean Literature and its evolution in the second half of the twentieth century up to the present. By “Anglophone” literature in this context we mean literature produced in the former British colonies in the area of West Indies or literature produced by authors from these colonies who migrated to Britain at some point. However, it is much more challenging to define the term Caribbean literature or Black British literature which is an umbrella term for any non-white British literature. This chapter thus aims at defining these terms, looking at the origins of the Caribbean literature, focusing on the post-WWII period, the first and second generation authors and the themes they explore. A shorter part would be devoted to Caribbean poetry and the final part will focus entirely on the biography and work of Caryl Phillips, a second-generation migrant writer who is considered as a representative of migrant literature, systematically dealing with the themes of identity and belonging.

3.1 HOW TO DEFINE CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

As has been said, the term Black British literature also covers Caribbean/West Indian literature, therefore it is reasonable to start with the definition of this more general term. By Black British literature we usually understand literature “[...] created and published in Britain, largely for a British audience, by black writers either born in Britain or who have spent a major portion of their lives in Britain.”⁵⁰ The very essence of the term suggests a racist connotation by using the term “black”. It is irrelevant to classify and define a particular literary movement on the basis of the writer’s skin colour. Moreover, the term black usually refers to any non-white authors, including African, South Asian and Caribbean authors. By labelling this literature as Black British, the British academics again suggest that literature produced by black authors is not part of the mainstream British literature. If we want to define Caribbean literature in English, we can find a number of definitions, none of which seems to be fully satisfactory. When defining it, we also have to consider a number of criteria we base

⁵⁰ David Dabydeen, *A Reader’s Guide to Westindian and Black British Literature* (London: Hansib Publishing, 1988), 10.

our definition on. According to David Dabydeen's definition, " 'West Indian literature' is that written by people from the West Indies (a geographical entity) on subjects relevant to West Indian history and cultures."⁵¹ We can immediately see a few gaps in this definition. Firstly, people from the West Indies may produce literature which has nothing to do with West Indian history or culture, secondly, there may be non-West Indian authors who, on the contrary, are concerned with West Indian subjects in their works and thirdly, there may be authors of West Indian origin who emigrated very early in life and therefore spent a considerable part of their life out of the Caribbean, moreover, they may not touch upon West Indian themes either. Therefore, it seems almost impossible to offer an adequate definition of this specific body of literature and if we do define it eventually, we should be aware of the limitations to our own or another author's definition.

Another aspect to be considered when defining Caribbean literature is the various criteria there are to be considered. Should we base our definition on the location where a work is produced, on the origin of its author or on the language in which it is written? Again, none of these criteria seems to be sufficient and reliable, we should rather consider several criteria at once. Caribbean literature does not necessarily have to be written by a Caribbean author, the second or third generation of migrants from the Caribbean already possess a British citizenship and some of them may have never been to their parents' homeland before. Caribbean literature was originally meant to target on black readership only, however, since the 1950s it has become increasingly popular even among white British readers. As far as the content of Caribbean literature is concerned, there is not a particular theme that would be used universally by all authors. What we can say almost for sure is that this literature reflects very often on the authors' first or second-hand experience and it explores the theme of migration and the subsequent reception of immigrants by the British society. The authors try to control the representation of Black community by means of their literary production. Obviously, there will be quite significant changes in the subject matter in the works by first and second-generation Caribbean writers for their experience differs quite a lot. More on the authors and their themes is to be found later in this chapter. As we can see, it is extremely difficult to define the Caribbean literature which has undergone a long and complicated development since its origins in the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, it has experienced a sort of a "boom" since the 1950s and it becomes more and more popular among

⁵¹ David Dabydeen, *A Reader's Guide to Westindian and Black British Literature*, 9.

readers all over the world and the academics pay more and more attention to Black British literature, publishing studies, offering courses at universities etc.

3.2 ORIGINS OF CARIBBEAN LITERATURE AND ITS EVOLUTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Some scholars date the beginnings of Anglophone Caribbean literature from 1948, the date of publication of Derek Walcott's first book. It is true that since the 1930s there have been tendencies to create a West Indian national literature written by their own people in the Caribbean creole as a reaction to the educational dominance of the British who ignored the West Indian literature.⁵² However, the true origins of Caribbean literature date back to the eighteenth century when the dominant literary genres were: slave narratives, autobiographies, memoirs and letters. The two most famous pioneers in these genres are Olaudah Equiano with his *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa* published in 1789 and Ignatius Sancho with his *The Letters of Ignatius Sancho* (1782). In a way, their experience of rejection and hostility can be likened to the experience of the 1950s immigrants to Britain.

Caribbean literature since the 1950s has experienced a kind of "boom" due to the massive immigration of West Indians, beginning with the Empire Windrush in 1948. Most of the authors who decided to write about their arrival in Britain and their shattered illusions shared the experience of colonization, displacement, slavery, emancipation and nationalism. They came to Britain in search of a better life and opportunities for themselves and their families. They believed in the common heritage with the mother country (Britain), however, they soon realized that they had been mistaken. In the 1950s and 1960s emigration was the major theme of Caribbean literature, writers also examined their colonial experience and the issues of the post-independence period (the independence mainly took place in the 1960s, e.g. in Jamaica and Trinidad). The 1950s and 1960s are associated with the first-generation writers who were primarily novelists. It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that the Caribbean poetry emerged with its forms based on indigenous models and mostly on the oral tradition. This period also witnessed the emergence of women's writing as opposed to the 1950s dominated

⁵² See Erika J. Walters, *Paradise Revealed: Readings in Caribbean Literature* (Maine: Maine Humanities Council, 2009), 5.

by male West Indian writers. The 1980s period is typically associated with the second generation of Caribbean writers who explore the metropolitan experience and the condition of being black in the modern world. At the same time many of these authors like to return to the past and examine the history of black experience as the past experience often shapes our present lives.

Frank Birbalsingh proposes in his *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English* that the Caribbean literature in English has come in four stages: the first half of the twentieth century; from 1950 to 1965; from 1965 to 1980 and from 1980 to the present. These stages may overlap.

The pre-1950 writers are generally colonial in their outlook, although there are exceptions, notably C. L. R. James, while the 1950-65 writers probe and question this outlook. Writers after 1965 (the third stage) espouse post-Independence interests, while writers after 1980 (the fourth stage) are concerned either with the fate of immigrants living on external frontier, or with the fate of the others like them.⁵³

3.3 FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION CARIBBEAN WRITERS AND THE THEMES OF THEIR WORKS

Migrant literature denotes either works produced in the time of migration or works reflecting on migration, therefore both the first and second generation writers can be called migrant writers if their work is concerned with the issue of migration in one way or another. Very often migrant literature mirrors the writer's experience, either first-hand or second-hand, since migration and displacement have considerably affected the second half of the twentieth century. Caryl Phillips is a migrant writer par excellence, exploring the themes of identity and belonging in his works. He seems to bridge the works of first and second generation writers in that he reflects on the experience of his parents' migration as well as on his generation's experience, thus his work spans the second half of the twentieth century up to now.

Among the pioneering male West Indian authors who dominated the 1950s we can cite: Andrew Salkey, Kamau Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, James Berry, George Lamming,

⁵³ Frank Birbalsingh, *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English* (London: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1996), 11.

Samuel Selvon and V. S. Naipaul, the last two being of Indo-Caribbean origin. This generation of writers share their struggle to assimilate in the hostile British society, their attempts at being accepted and the reality of not being accepted. Since their arrival they are put under the pressure of racial prejudice and systematic discrimination. The feeling of alienation, unbelonging and isolation are common to them. The first generation is typically associated with the dream of returning home. Since most of the migrants came for economic reasons and they meant to get a well-paid job and save some money, they intended to return one day and ensure a better standard of living back home. Most of them left their friends and relatives behind and they relied on re-joining them a few years later. They tended to maintain a strong cultural identity and they did not wish to adopt the British lifestyle and customs unlike the generation of their children. We can often find the use of imagery and colours and objects from the home country (an island in the Caribbean) in their works. In contrast, this imagery is completely unfamiliar for most of the second generation writers who prefer using English images and references.⁵⁴

The second generation Caribbean writers generally consider themselves as being part of British society because unlike their parents they came to Britain at a very early age or they were even born in Britain, therefore they do not know any other home than Britain. They grew up in Britain, they were educated there and it is natural they feel more at home in Britain than in the West Indies where only some of them return on regular basis. The fact that they feel a part of British society does not mean that they have never experienced racism and discrimination so common to their parents. They have lived through the 1970s and 1980s racial riots and anti-immigration policies but they have learnt to fight for their recognition and integration by participating in various black movements and public protests. They too experience problems with identity and belonging, however, in most cases they do not feel the urge to return to the Caribbean. The writers explore themes of the frontier experience, sometimes they return to the time of their parents' arrival in their fiction but in most cases they share their personal experience of being black (migrant) in contemporary Britain. Among these second generation writers belong: Joan Riley, Caryl Phillips, Mike Phillips, Merle Collins, Meera Syal, Diran Adebayo, Zadie Smith, Courtia Newland and Bernardine Evaristo.

⁵⁴ See R. Victoria Arana and Lauri Ramey, *Black British Writing* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 105.

To sum up, “The impossibility of achieving a sense of belonging in a racist, white society is the central theme of much black British writing.”⁵⁵ On the other hand, this theme cannot be universal across different authors’ works.

In essence, the new generation of black writers in Britain cannot write about some faraway home from a position of remembrance; they write about Britain from their own British viewpoints and put their own British spins on the world as seen from their very own perspectives. What characterized an earlier black British literature, the migrants’ otherness, emanated from their coming to England and searching for a particular kind of perceived Britishness that did not necessarily exist. Black writers born in England have none of these illusions. They are developing within the British landscapes and social groups that they have been born into, writing about their own impressions of Britain from a new British perspective.⁵⁶

While first generation Caribbean writers reflect on their experience of migration from ex-colonies to the racist Britain they thought to be their homeland to some extent, the second generation writers either return to the history to highlight its impact on their present identity or they explore the lives of black people in contemporary Britain. The first generation is more concerned with alienation and displacement whereas the second generation is more concerned with belonging and acceptance.

3.4 CARIBBEAN POETRY (A BRIEF OVERVIEW)

The British Caribbean poetry is very diverse although the poetry of the post-war era might be labelled “ethnic” since it more than often deals with the migrant experience and the issues of displacement and alienation. The Caribbean poets in Britain have had to struggle long for recognition and incorporation into the mainstream British literature. Moreover, Caribbean poetry has always been overshadowed by Caribbean fiction which is thought to be more accessible and readable with respect to the public. Black British poetry, which includes West Indian poetry produced in Britain, has been exclusively but mistakenly labelled “performance poetry” as opposed to the establishment poetry dominated by white writers. Therefore, it is

⁵⁵ Arana and Ramey, *Black British Writing*, 88.

⁵⁶ Arana and Ramey, *Black British Writing*, 107.

assumed that the poetry composed by black poets is not primarily meant to be published but performed. For this reason, black poets have to make their living by doing readings and workshops, performing in clubs etc. Reviewers do not seem to be particularly interested in their poetry either. Publishers assume that their poetry would target only a small audience, therefore they are reluctant to accept and publish their work. “[...] the Black British “performance poet” who decides to produce work to be seen on the page is faced with a massive challenge as many publishers suspect that the work will simply not “stand up” in print [...]”⁵⁷ Among the most prominent Caribbean poets belong for instance: Claude McKay, Louise Bennett, James Berry, John Agard, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah, Levi Tafari, Grace Nichols or Jean Binta Breeze.

The Caribbean poetry produced in the Caribbean during the British colonial rule used to be based on the oral tradition and it was written mostly in Caribbean creole, a mixture of English and African dialects. The poets often made use of European forms as well. In the colonial era, poetry was overshadowed by fiction probably due to its limited subject matter. “The Caribbean poets wrote predominantly landscape poetry that cherished the beauty of the West Indies.”⁵⁸ The choice of themes changed in the course of the twentieth century. The poets writing in the first half of the twentieth century often make use of the Caribbean creole and of the calypso rhythms and they explore themes of slavery, colonialism, British superiority and racial prejudice. In the post-war period, Caribbean ethnic poetry started to flourish. “The ethnic poetry tried to capture the natural rhythm of speech and aimed at depicting the harsh conditions of British ethnic minorities.”⁵⁹ The Windrush generation of poets coming to Britain in the 1950s reflects on the immigrant experience, especially the search for identity and belonging in a society hostile to newcomers; the omnipresent racial prejudice and discrimination immigrants had to fight with. The West Indian immigrants in Britain had to live in poor housing conditions and accept poorly-paid manual jobs. “For this community, poetry became a powerful source of expressing their political and cultural

⁵⁷ Kadija Sesay, *Write Black, Write British* (London: Hansib Publishing, 2005), 284.

⁵⁸ Pavlína Flajšarová, “No Matter How Long the Night, the Day is Sure to Come: Differences, Diversity and Identities in Caribbean-British Poetry since 1945,” *American and British Studies Annual* 5 (2012): 19.

⁵⁹ Flajšarová, 22.

heritage.”⁶⁰ Their poetry thus represents the condition of the whole Caribbean community and often stems from their own experience like British Caribbean fiction.

Claude McKay and Lord Kitchener used the calypso rhythms in their poems. The poems being close to natural speech were thus suitable for public reading or performing. As for the language of the poems: “Since the 1950s, many Caribbean poets who settled in Britain have chosen to reject Standard British English used by mainstream poets, preferring the creole that seemed to reflect their fractured identity.”⁶¹ Another motivation for using the creole instead of Standard English was their wish to distinguish themselves from the white British poets and use the language as a social and cultural “weapon”. Many of the poets sought to break the stereotypical images of black people as viewed by the British society. They struggled to be accepted and recognized as British citizens with equal rights and opportunities. Their poems seem to fulfil a prophetic function in a much better way than many works of fiction do. The 1970s witnessed an emergence of politically-engaged ethnic literature, including poetry which reacted to the racial tensions and the rise of black political and cultural movements both in America and in Britain. The contemporary Caribbean poetry is diverse both in form and content. However, among the common themes persists the life of the black people as opposed to that of the white. Some of the poets created a very angry and militant branch of poetry, for instance Linton Kwesi Johnson who introduced dub poetry to Britain. “Johnson goes beyond the calypso legacy and incorporates elements of dub poetry and reggae.”⁶² Another politically-engaged poet is Benjamin Zephaniah who writes in Standard English and still his poetry sounds very rhythmical. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, female poets began to emerge. We can name two: Grace Nichols and Jean Binta Breeze both of whom address “the diasporic situation of not belonging to the new country of settlement, a sense of being uprooted and not being able to assimilate with the new society.”⁶³ By creating the poetic persona of a fat black woman, Grace Nichols achieves a lighter and more humorous tone.

⁶⁰ Flajšarová, 24.

⁶¹ Flajšarová, 27.

⁶² Flajšarová, 30.

⁶³ Flajšarová, 33.

Before looking more closely at a successful representative of Anglophone Caribbean literature - Caryl Phillips, it should be admitted that the literature produced by West Indian immigrants in Britain or their children has brought new forms, ideas and attitudes into the mainstream British literature. Therefore it has made a considerable contribution by attracting more and more readers who want to learn about the migrant experience. The fiction writers and poets offer a different perspective, a perspective of an “outsider” merely tolerated but never fully integrated. They challenge the stereotypical image of the British being open-minded and helpful towards strangers. This may be true unless the strangers are black and want to settle permanently in Britain. The black presence and white prejudice and intolerance only led to racial conflicts and violence. Fortunately, it seems that Britain has finally realized and recognized its multicultural nature and has learnt to appreciate the positive aspects of the presence of various ethnic minorities and their cultures and traditions.

3.5 THE PLACE OF CARYL PHILLIPS IN THE CONTEMPORARY BRITISH LITERATURE

It is especially relevant to give an account of Phillips’s life story first since his personal experience as well as his parents’ experience is very much present in both his non-fiction and fiction works. He is a very prolific contemporary Caribbean author in English and he belongs to the second generation of Caribbean writers in Britain as he came at a very early age with his parents in the 1950s. In his works, he is concerned a lot with history and its impact upon the present as well as the future. The themes of his works range from slavery, colonialism, independence to migration, Holocaust, racism, national and cultural identity and many others. “Phillips is engaged with debates about *historical* distinctiveness, such as whether the Holocaust can be usefully compared to other examples of racism and genocide; and he is engaged with debates about *national* distinctiveness, such as whether works of literature or other cultural products can be usefully classified by the national origin of their makers, however that origin is defined.”⁶⁴ Phillips work addresses both individual/personal and universal/general issues. His works resemble anthologies in that they create a kind of collective experience.

⁶⁴ Rebecca L. Walkowitz, “The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer,” *Contemporary Literature* 47 (Winter, 2006): 537, accessed January 11, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4489178>.

Phillips's novels and nonfiction works are like anthologies in that they sample and collate stories of racism, slavery, European anti-Semitism, and recent violence against immigrants. But unlike other anthologies, which create a single series, Phillips's books tend to promote various microseries within them. In addition to collating the lives of several migrants, his books also represent the life of any single migrant, including their author, as yet another collated account.⁶⁵

Although scholars do not pay that much attention to Phillips's life and work in their studies and monographs, however, the author's own official website and other websites dedicated to his persona demonstrate his increasing popularity and importance within the canon of the contemporary Black British literature. Looking at Phillips's biography might provide an interesting and useful insight into his extensive bibliography. The fact that he keeps moving between Britain, the Caribbean and the United States entitles him to address migrant experience: that of alienation, displacement, rootlessness and split identities.

3.5.1 CARYL PHILLIPS'S BIOGRAPHY

Caryl Phillips was born in 1958 on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean. When he was only a few months old, his parents decided to migrate to Britain. They first settled in Leeds, then in Birmingham. Phillips proved to be a very intelligent student since he studied English literature at Oxford and he graduated in 1979. In the 1980s he began to make his living as a full-time writer and he succeeded. During this decade he also travelled to the Caribbean and to Europe. He felt the urge to travel and these journeys helped him understand his identity which was and still is extremely complex.

In the decade after his graduation Phillips made further journeys, notably one to the Caribbean in 1980 and another to Europe in 1984. These made him even more aware of the richness of his multicultural background – including African but also European and Indian ancestry – and strengthened his determination to write, which resulted in the following years in a prolific and original production.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Walkowitz, 539.

⁶⁶ Bénédicte Ledent, "Caryl Phillips: A Master of Ambiguity," *Engelstalige literatur na 1945* 1 (2004): 1-2, accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.l3.ulg.ac.be/phillips/documents/bledent_cphillips.pdf.

In the following decade, he started his academic career. From 1998 to 2005 he was a professor of English at University of Columbia in New York and now he teaches at Yale University. Phillips is considered a widely recognized writer and academic and Britain's most prominent black writer. "[...] Phillips is the first writer of Caribbean origin to be recognised as belonging to the "mainstream" of British literature [...]"⁶⁷ His life or more precisely his life experience has shaped his works to a considerable extent.

3.5.2 CARYL PHILLIPS'S BIBLIOGRAPHY

Caryl Phillips is a very prolific author producing a wide range of literary genres and themes. Although he is best known as a novelist, he also writes essays, critiques and a range of plays for theatre, television and radio. His work has been influenced by several black American authors such as Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Toni Morrison. The question of belonging and identity (national as well as cultural) is a universal theme appearing in most of his fiction and non-fiction works.

Since he is best known for his novels, this part will be devoted to a timeline of his novels, including their brief characterization. Phillips's first two novels are said to be semi-autobiographical. His first novel entitled *The Final Passage* was published in 1985 and it deals with his parents' experience of post-war migration. His second novel *A State of Independence* published a year later is about the ambivalence of homecoming, it focuses on a confused migrant who feels at home neither in Britain nor back in the Caribbean. Phillips's later novels deal with wider-ranging topics and they can be labelled historical novels. The following four novels received a wide critical acclaim and commercial success. *Higher Ground* (1989) is his first novel about slave trade. The following novel *Cambridge* (1991) is narrated from the perspective of a slave owner's daughter and from the perspective of Cambridge, a black slave. His novel *Crossing the River* (1993) was nominated for Booker Prize. It consists of several sections with several narrators. Again, Phillips deliberately uses the diffracted narrative technique. He does not only deal with oppression of the black people but he also addresses Jewish persecution and Holocaust, for instance in the novel *The Nature of Blood* (1997). Another novel dealing with slavery was published in 2000 and is entitled *The Atlantic Sound*. Phillips's two latest novels were published in 2003 and 2005 respectively, *A*

⁶⁷ Ledent, 3.

Distant Shore and *Dancing in the Dark*. Concerning his dramatic and non-fiction works, he wrote three plays dealing with West Indian experience in Britain and the relationship between a white woman and a black man, a topic unacceptable at the time of his parents' arrival. These plays are: *Strange Fruit* (1981), *Where There is Darkness* (1982) and *The Shelter* (1984). As for his non-fiction, he wrote a travel essay *The European Tribe* in 1987 and essay proved to be his favourite genre as in 2001 he published a whole collection of essays entitled *A New World Order*. Moreover, his novels and essays are meant to be complementary in that they tackle similar topics. Phillips is also the author of two anthologies: *Extravagant Strangers* (1997) and *The Right Set* (1999).

Phillips's works are claimed to be original both in form and subject matter. He explores a wide range of topics as well as narrative strategies. He frequently uses multiple narratives and historical revisionism. His use of fragmented narratives is meant to illustrate the lives of the displaced characters. Phillips likes to use intertextuality, he refers to other authors' works either explicitly or implicitly. What is more interesting is the fact that he frequently uses allusions in his the titles of his works.

Finally, a similar affiliative impulse can be found in the allusive nature of Phillips's titles, many of which refer to the titles of songs by artists who are culturally close to him, like Billie Holiday (*Strange Fruit*), Stevie Wonder (*Higher Ground*) or Curtis Mayfield (*A New World Order*), or who share some of his preoccupations, which is the case of Billy Bragg (*A Distant Shore*).⁶⁸

As has once been mentioned, Phillips's fiction and non-fiction (essays in particular) deal with similar themes, thus reading both his fiction and non-fiction may facilitate our understanding of his works but also of his characters who play a crucial role. "If a knowledge of Phillips's intertext proves useful to understand the intricacies and ironies of his novels, it is also important to read his fiction with his own essays in mind for they tackle similar themes, though in a less oblique manner."⁶⁹ There exists a sort of a complementarity between Phillips's novels and essays. Phillips uses a character-based narrative technique, so that it is the protagonist who is standing in the centre of his novels, no matter if it is a male or a female protagonist, Phillips offers both viewpoints to the reader. The question is if it is possible to

⁶⁸ Ledent, 5.

⁶⁹ Ledent, 5.

create a portrait of a typical Phillipsian character. It seems to be a challenging task with respect to the number of novels he has written so far. However, there seem to be quite a lot of common features that his characters share. “Practically all the individuals in Phillips’s fiction are profoundly isolated, their loneliness being the result of circumstances beyond their control, such as war or deportation, but also of an ingrained inability to communicate successfully often combined with hypersensitivity.”⁷⁰ Phillips also draws attention to complicated human relationships, isolated individuals who are often unable to engage in efficient communication with their family or partner. Another common experience of the Phillipsian characters is the dysfunctional family and particularly the ambivalent relationship of parents with their children. “The tension between loneliness and belonging, which is after all the common fate of exiled people, is perhaps most dramatically played out in the context of the dysfunctional family, another common denominator of Phillips’s characters.”⁷¹ His originality is also based on the universal dimension of his work. While representing the experience of a whole community, his work is largely concerned with the impact of migrant experience on an individual, like Caryl Phillips himself. “Immigration, which is one of the many current issues raised in this novel together with crime, education and poverty, is not viewed as a general concept, but as a phenomenon which is interesting only through its concrete impact on individual lives.”⁷² Although Phillips raises a number of appealing questions in his works, the reader hardly ever gets any specific answers. Phillips’s works do not seem to provide any sort of resolution, moreover, most of his novels remain open-ended and therefore ambiguous. Obviously, Phillips does not like to give ready-made solutions to the problems readers encounter in his novels. With no doubt, he merits the statute of a recognized and widely read ethnic writer by bringing new perspectives and themes into the canon of mainstream British literature.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to define Anglophone Caribbean literature with respect to the mainstream British literature. It has been concluded that there is not a single definition which would be perfect and we have to consider a large number of criteria such as: the origin of the author, the subject matter of the work, the language of the work and

⁷⁰ Ledent, 8.

⁷¹ Ledent, 9.

⁷² Ledent, 10.

many others. Moreover, there are several names given to the body of literature written by Caribbean authors (either living in the Caribbean or in Britain/the United States/Canada) on subjects related to the Caribbean (the theme of migration the most often), for instance Caribbean-British literature, Anglophone Caribbean/West Indian literature or simply Black British literature which includes works by Asian or African authors. A brief summary of the origins and evolution of Caribbean literature has been provided, including the prominent prose and poetry writers and the topics they deal with in their works. A distinction has been made between the first generation of Caribbean migrants in Britain (coming to Britain mostly in the 1950s) and the second generation (either born in Britain or coming there with their parents at an early age) in an attempt to justify the differences in their experience which gets reflected in their literary production. A theme that both generations seem to share (including poets) is that of migration and migrant's experience in a predominantly hostile and racist British society. Although the representatives of the younger generation have been brought up and educated in Britain and they share an adherence to Britain as their home, they have not been spared from racial prejudice and discrimination of white British citizens. Literature and arts enable them to give expression to their suffering and isolation. A remarkable second-generation Caribbean author widely addressing the themes of identity, belonging and migrant experience in his works is Caryl Phillips. He is a young and a prolific writer who manages to link history to the present and even to the future. The topics of his novels and non-fiction works (mostly essays) range from slavery, colonization, nationalism to migration, racism and uprootedness. Phillips undoubtedly occupies a prominent position in contemporary British fiction regardless of his ethnic origin. The following, and at the same time the concluding chapter, will be concerned with the Caribbean migrant experience in Phillips's first two novels: *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence*. It will be interesting to compare a male and a female point of view, moreover each of the novels deals with migration in a different direction, the former to Britain and the latter from Britain back to the Caribbean.

4. ANALYSIS OF CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE IN HIS NOVELS

4.1 EXPERIENCE OF CARIBBEAN MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN AFTER WW2

Migrants from various islands in the Caribbean started arriving in Britain in large numbers since 1948 when the Windrush docked at Tilbury. Most of them came in search of better lives and opportunities not only for themselves but mainly for their children. They came with high expectations which soon turned into bitter disappointment. No matter which part of the Caribbean these migrants came from, they were all labelled “coloured” by the white racist and ethnocentric society. They posed a threat to the purity of the British white race. This hostility and antipathy of the British society towards black ethnic minorities, however, is not a phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century. It is anchored in the history of slavery and colonialism and unfortunately this attitude persists up to the present days.

The black people have always been regarded as inferior to the British, as the others. The British saw their presence in the Caribbean as highly beneficial and enlightening for the black “primitive savages”. “The idea of bringing light to the black race in the 18th century in the name of Christianity was one of the tools employed to justify colonialism. The attributes of backwardness, primitivity, evil, destruction and darkness had been long standing references to the black man, a man fit only to be a slave.”⁷³ The British did their best to suppress the black people’s original culture and history; moreover, they made them admire everything that was British.

The migrants saw their coming to Britain as a significant achievement in their lives, they put all their hopes into a new life in Britain. However, they came to realize Britain was not their “mother country” and they were never meant to fit into the white racist society. In most cases, they ended up doing unskilled, low-paid jobs that none of the British wanted to do themselves; they ended up living in poor housing conditions; and various forms of racism and discrimination became a part of their everyday life. The first generations of migrants tended to accept this fate as it was and they soothed themselves by the dream of going back home one day. The second generation migrants, on the other hand, seemed to react in a more confident and even violent manner. They were proud of their “blackness” and knowing no other home

⁷³ Nah Charles Nyitsotemve, “Signposts of Alterity,” *The Indian Review of World Literature in English* 5 (2009): 3, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://worldlitolonline.net/signposts-of-alterity.pdf>.

than Britain, they struggled hard for recognition and integration. Having to face constant racist attacks and discrimination at all levels, Caribbean migrants tended to create communities to stick together. British hostility only strengthened fellowship among migrants and it provoked more abundant expression of their culture and art. The Caribbean experience in Britain may be literally referred to as one of “trauma”. It is again the Caribbean author Caryl Phillips who has brought a new perspective into British literature by exploring the black diaspora experience from the times of slavery and colonialism up to the present (more on the portrayal of the Caribbean experience in his novels to be said later in this chapter).

4.2 FIRST VERSUS SECOND GENERATION OF CARIBBEAN MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN

The first generation of Caribbean migrants in Britain (those who came in the 1950s and 1960s) feel a strong attachment to their homeland and they dream of returning one day. “The dream of return is still a powerful and recurring one. The importance and value of home is never more appreciated than when one is in exile. And in a hostile land the dream of return becomes a burning desire.”⁷⁴ However, what most of them do not realize is the fact that they might never be able to afford the journey back to the Caribbean due to their lack of money. Moreover, those who return after they have spent several years or even decades in Britain learn that their mother country has changed and so have they. Consequently, they often find it difficult to readapt to the life back home and in some cases they are even regarded as foreigners in their own country. “What many “returnees” forget is that when they “return”, they inevitably return at a different point in time from when they had left and as a consequence, have “returned” to a different place – because place is always bound by time.”⁷⁵

Second generation migrants share the experience of racism and discrimination with their parents. On the contrary, they do not share the attachment to the Caribbean since many of them were born in Britain or moved to Britain at a very early age.

Most second-generation Caribbeans in Britain have either lived in this country since early childhood or were actually born and brought up in Britain. In other words, they

⁷⁴ Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 248.

⁷⁵ Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 248.

have either spent the greater proportion of their lives in the “Mother Country” or for all their lives have resided here. This important characteristic of the “second generation” has profound implications for their view of themselves and the world in which they live.⁷⁶

Most of them have never actually been to their parents’ homeland before and the only “home” they know is Britain despite the fact that they are not treated accordingly. Nevertheless, they struggle with racism and for recognition much more vociferously than their parents once did. They also freely express the pride in their ethnic origin. In terms of their cultural identity, as they have been brought up and educated in Britain, they are a sort of “cultural hybrids” in a way that they are determined both by the Caribbean culture and by the western (British) culture.

4.3 THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

The issue of identity (ethnic, cultural or national) and belonging is a crucial one for migrants. The fact that they left their home to live in a completely different country whose society feels antipathy and even hostility towards them has a considerable impact on their identity and sense of self. Migrants from very remote parts of the Caribbean are suddenly brought to a close proximity and they often create tight communities which give them at least a little security. The experience of living in a strongly racist Britain forges a new black identity. The identity formation is a dynamic and long-term process. “Race consciousness has been awakened in these black migrants thanks to the racism of the society into which they have entered. A new identity has been forged in the crucible of racist Britain.”⁷⁷ British people simply distinguish between two races: white (“we”) and black (“them” or “the other”). Coming to Britain with great expectations and with the idea in their mind that Britain is a sort of “home country” for them, their illusions are gradually shattered to pieces. They realize they do not and very probably will not belong in Britain and the only message they hear all around is “go back home”. “His presence in England dispels two principal ideas, first that the West Indian and the British do not make up “the same flag” and “the same empire”, and second,

⁷⁶ Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 251.

⁷⁷ Winston James and Clive Harris, 254.

that England is no home for the West Indian. [...] Their only achievement in London is the education they receive that they are the other – they are inferior and different.”⁷⁸ As far as their cultural identity is concerned, it is also very dynamic as it keeps changing over time and it is primarily influenced by the process of migration and the subsequent (mostly negative) experience in the host country. There exist two types of cultural interaction: one is inter-Caribbean cultururation which refers to the interaction between cultures from various parts of the Caribbean, and intra-Caribbean cultururation which refers to the interaction between Caribbean and British cultures.⁷⁹ The level of maintaining links with the original culture influences cultural continuity. In case of second generation migrants, we rather speak about cultural erosion since they seem to be influenced more by British culture than by the West Indian culture.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF PHILLIPS’S NOVEL *THE FINAL PASSAGE*

In this chapter I will deal with the analyses of Phillips’s first two novels: *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence* respectively. After analysing the novels separately, they will be compared and contrasted and eventually, parallels will be drawn between the protagonists’ experience and Phillips’s own (mainly based on his essays). As for the genre and theme of his first two novels, they can be covered by an umbrella term “migrant writing”, more precisely they are travel discourse/travel narrative. They are based on the displacement of Black people which dates back to the history of slavery and colonialism. These displaced and uprooted people are in a constant search for “home”, which oscillates someplace between Africa, Caribbean and Britain. The journey that the protagonists of the novels have to undergo is both a physical and a spiritual journey. While in *The Final Passage*, Leila and Michael move from an island in the Caribbean to Britain, Bertram Francis from *A State of Independence* moves in the opposite direction – from Britain back to St Kitts. What follows from Phillips’s early pieces of fiction is the fact that he does not reduce his works to one setting only but he addresses both the Caribbean and Britain.

⁷⁸ Nyitsotemve, “Signposts of Alterity,” 5-6.

⁷⁹ See Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 258.

4.4.1 FORMAL ANALYSIS OF *THE FINAL PASSAGE*

The title of the novel refers to the “Middle Passage” – the process of bringing Africans as slaves from Africa to the Caribbean across the Atlantic. In the novel Leila undergoes the passage from her island in the Caribbean to Britain (London). Apart from the physical journey, the passage may as well be regarded as that from innocence to experience. Only when she has left her home country does Leila realize where her real home is. The passage is final for Leila’s mother who moves to England to undergo medical treatment, however, she dies there. On the other hand, Leila contemplates returning to the island at the end of the novel.

The novel is set on a nameless island which, however, is very probably based on Phillips’s island of birth – St Kitts. Another setting is London where the two protagonists move with their baby boy in order to start a new and hopefully a better life. England is simply associated with great hope and high expectations. The migration takes place roughly in the 1950s, during the period of great migration from the former British colonies. It is Phillips’s family who came to Britain at this point. Although the ending of the novel is ambiguous, it is very likely that Leila would move back to St. Kitts with her little son and the second baby on the way.

The novel tells the story of a nineteen-year old mulatto woman Leila who wants to escape her aimless life and dysfunctional marriage by moving to England with her husband and their little son Calvin. Throughout the novel we learn about her motifs for leaving her native island. She also wants to join there her mother who is seriously ill and who came to Britain to undergo medical treatment. Leila imagines that they would be able to live together happily and she would look after her mother. Unfortunately, their stay in England is a big failure from the beginning to the end. Leila’s mother is in hospital, they have nowhere to stay, their relationship gets even worse and they end up living in a house that is falling apart. Michael puts all the blame on Leila and he soon abandons her. After her mother’s death and her separation from Michael, Leila gives up all her hopes and illusions and she thinks of going back to St Kitts where at least she felt secure and welcome.

The story is narrated in the third person, however, it is seen from Leila’s perspective. Therefore Phillips paradoxically offers a female point of view despite the fact that Leila can be considered a passive character since she represents the submissive role of women in the

Caribbean society. Phillips largely focuses on individual experience by presenting individual histories.

As far as the structure of the novel is concerned, it is worth looking at the epigraph first. It is an extract from T. S. Eliot's "Little Gidding".

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.⁸⁰

By using this extract from Eliot, Phillips seems to suggest that the Caribbean migration to Britain is a timeless and cyclical process. Moreover, the extract tries to imply that history does not exist outside England which makes it imperialistic in spirit.⁸¹ The epigraph apparently refers to migration of people from the Caribbean and particularly to the treatment they receive in their seemingly "mother country" – Britain.

The novel has a clearly disjointed (cyclical) structure, mixing the past with the present. This fragmented narrative should evoke the displacement of its characters. "This disjointed narrative configuration demonstrates the broken histories in the lives of the characters. More than this, it created for the reader a sense of isolation, desperation and loss as depicted in the novel."⁸² It consists of five parts which do not follow a chronological order. The first part called "The End" deals with Leila's preparation for the journey to England. The end obviously refers to the end of her life on the island and at the same time a new beginning in London. The second part "Home" goes back to Leila's life on the island and it makes us understand why she finally decides to leave this life behind and start from the scratch elsewhere. We learn about her relationship with Michael whom she marries despite her

⁸⁰ Caryl Phillips, *The Final Passage* (Great Britain: Vintage, 2004).

⁸¹ See Bénédicte Ledent, *Caryl Phillips* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 20.

⁸² Horace I. Goddard, "Travel discourse in Caryl Phillips's *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence*," *Kola* 21.1 (2001): 151-152, accessed March 24, 2013, <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA204205462&v=2.1&u=palacky&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w>.

mother's warnings. They have a baby boy together, Calvin, whom Michael cares little for. He is rather busy having affairs with other women. Combined with her mother's illness and her unexpected "trip" to England, Leila sees her life as a complete failure and so she decides to move to England to make a new start there. "The night before, Leila had decided that if England was going to be a new start after the pain of last year, then she must take as little as possible with her to remind her of the island."⁸³ England is a place of hope for many people from the Caribbean, including Leila. Unfortunately, she does not realize the consequences this decision can have for their future lives. Not that her relationship with Michael does not improve in London, it even gets worse and he blames her for any trouble that they encounter. The third part called "England" is devoted to their stay in London. It makes the reader follow them from their very first steps until the end. Shortly after their arrival, they start looking for Leila's mother and a place to stay. They find out that she is in hospital and they spend a few nights at her landlord's small place. Discrimination and racial hostility become a common part of their lives. They end up living in a rented house which is nearly falling apart and so is their marriage. Michael stays in the house less and less until he abandons Leila and Calvin for good. He does not support Leila even during the worst time of her life – when her mother dies and her dreams fall into pieces. The fourth part looks back at their journey to England on board of a ship. It follows their arrival in England, their search for Leila's mother, for accommodation and a job for Michael. The final part symbolically called "Winter" refers to the physical coolness of this season, but also to the coolness with which they are treated in England. Last but not least, it represents the coolness of their relationship. Leila ends up deserted, defeated and disillusioned. Having lost her mother, having been abandoned by her husband and being pregnant with a second baby, this time she decides to get rid of all the possessions reminding her of England and she thinks of going back to St. Kitts where at least she feels secure and welcome. "She began to feed the fire with the objects and garments that reminded her of her five months in England."⁸⁴ Although the novel's ending is ambiguous, one thing is clear – Leila's hopes and dreams of a new and better life turn sour. "At the end of the novel Leila's quest for love, a better life, and happiness remains unfulfilled."⁸⁵

⁸³ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 15.

⁸⁴ Philips, *The Final Passage*, 200.

⁸⁵ Goddard, 156.

In terms of the protagonists, the novel follows the complicated and gradually deteriorating relationship between Leila and Michael who have very diverging personalities and it is quite obvious from the beginning that their marriage is not meant to be happy. Even their wedding day appears to be a disaster. Leila, whose point of view the reader adopts, is portrayed as aimless, naïve, withdrawn and achieving nothing in her life. She is a mulatto girl from St Patricks whose father is unknown and she faces double oppression: on the one hand, she is a victim of colonialism and on the other hand, a victim of male domination. She makes three decisive actions in her life: firstly she marries Michael, a poor boy from Sandy Bay, secondly she decides to leave her home island and move to England to start anew and thirdly, she rents a derelict house in London.⁸⁶ On her arrival, she is apprehensive but at the same time excited, however, her dreams quickly fall apart and she completely loses her self-esteem since her husband leaves her and she feels she is not wanted in Britain. She undoubtedly learns a lesson by going to England and in the end, she is ready to go back home and look after herself and her two children alone.

Michael is a clearly negative character and a troublemaker. He leads a parasitic life and he fails as a partner as well as a father. He is a drunkard and a womanizer, on his wedding day he ends up with his lover. He never really grows up and remains selfish and irresponsible. He feels inferior to Leila and is filled with hatred towards himself as well as the others. He blames her for any misfortune that happens to them.

“Why you can’t back me up like any wife should do? Why you can’t say, Michael, I think it’s a good idea, or Michael, I’m proud of you showing some ambition and spark even though I know it’s a risk, or something like that? Other fellers have wives who help them, why must I be different? Why? [...] So you don’t think I’m interested in Calvin or what? Michael shouted. “You don’t think that what I’m planning is for the benefit of my son or what! [...] Because his mother is a selfish, superior arse who think she do me a favour by marrying to me.”⁸⁷

He also blames her for not respecting and admiring him; he fails to realize that she has nothing to admire him for. After this final argument, Michael leaves and does not come back again. Not even in England does he realize his responsibility as a husband and a father.

⁸⁶ See Louis James, “The Final Passage,” *Wasafiri* 4 (1986): 33.

⁸⁷ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 178.

Michael's and Leila's two friends back in the Caribbean, Millie and Bradeth, unlike Leila and Michael have a nice and functional marriage, they are supportive of each other but mainly they value their homeland and their national identity. Millie together with Michael's grandfather are two characters who strongly disapprove of emigration and they claim that one should not despise his/her own roots and that home is where one belongs and feels welcome.

“Then I expect I maybe going come and see you on holiday one time but it's here I belong. You maybe don't see it but me, I love this island with every bone in my body. It's small and poor, and all the rest of the things that you and Michael probably think wrong with it, but for all of that I still love it. It's my home and home is where you feel welcome.”⁸⁸

It is exactly the issue of belonging which appears across Phillips's works. He portrays characters who, for one reason or another, do not seem to belong and who feel the urge to migrate and look for a place they could finally call “home”. Leila still has a chance to come back home and settle there again, supported by her lifelong friends. However, the situation is much worse for return migrants who have spent decades in Britain and who eventually decide to move back to the Caribbean. What is more, they often feel strangers back “home” and they end up torn between two countries, belonging to neither of them. This is the case of Bertram Francis, the protagonist of Phillips's second novel *A State of Independence*. Phillips is preoccupied with the search for belonging and identity throughout his works of fiction as well as non-fiction. He can draw inspiration from his own experience of migration: he was born in St Kitts, grew up in Britain and he currently keeps moving between Britain, the Caribbean and the United States.

4.4.2 MIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN *THE FINAL PASSAGE*

In this part the physical as well as psychological journey of the protagonist Leila will be followed in a chronological order as well as her “coming into consciousness” and her quest for self. She decides to leave in order to escape her aimless life on the island, however, her stay appears to be a failure and she learns that it is her homeland back in the Caribbean where she really belongs.

⁸⁸ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 115.

Although Leila puts all her hopes in their trip to England, she feels apprehensive about their new life and so does Michael. “For the first time Leila had heard an almost candid apprehension in his voice. “Leaving this place going make me feel old, you know, like leaving the safety of your family to live with strangers.”⁸⁹ As soon as they arrive in London, Michael seems to forget all his fears and he seems to be enjoying the new start abroad unlike his wife. Before they leave, however, they speculate about what their lives would be like. While Leila’s and Michael’s vision is very idealistic, others try to show them the other side of the coin.

“It’s just that I don’t want to spend the rest of my life looking for small work when I know I can get big work if I wants it. Me, I want a car and a big house and a bit of power under my belt, like any man does want. This country breed too many people who just cut cane in season and happy to be rum-jumbie out of it.”⁹⁰

Leila’s friend Millie does not understand their lack of respect and affection for their home country. Michael’s grandfather talks to him before their departure and tries to teach him not to forget the importance of the past and of his roots.

“Ambition going teach you that you going has to flee from beauty, Michael. Panama? Costa Rica? Brazil? America? England? Canada, maybe? West Indian man always have to leave his islands for there don’t be nothing here for him, but when you leave, boy, don’t be like we. Bring back a piece of the place with you. [...] Ambition going teach you that you going has to flee from beauty and when you gone to wherever, remember me, boy. Remember me.”⁹¹

It is obvious that our two protagonists will not learn the truth until they live through this experience themselves. Both of them see England as a land of opportunities and prosperity, however, they fail to realize this holds true only if one’s skin colour is white. At least, their journey makes them understand where they truly belong. “The West Indian would not know who he is until he goes to England.”⁹² The urge to escape from their mother country seems to

⁸⁹ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 11.

⁹⁰ Phillios, *The Final Passage*, 103.

⁹¹ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 42.

⁹² Nyitsotemve, 5.

follow logically from the years of British colonial oppression. They have been taught so long to admire the colonizer until they believe they are inferior and by migrating to Britain, they intend to fulfil their ambitions. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that lots of them return sooner or later and the only thing they bring back from Britain (where they literally have to struggle for survival) is their failure. The act of migrating to Britain does not bring a solution to the migrant's problems in the Caribbean. "In the same way, a journey to Britain does not magically cure the malaise inherited from colonialism. On the contrary, it only seems to make it worse in the short term."⁹³ Leila's life story provides an appropriate illustration of this phenomenon.

Once Leila and Michael are in London and they start looking for a place to live, they are immediately confronted with omnipresent racist signs such as: "No coloureds, No vacancies, No children" [...] "Leila felt grateful for their honesty."⁹⁴ The British explicitly make them understand that they are not wanted. Leila also notices that the white people seem to be constantly watching her and that the black people in the cold British streets do not look very content. "She noticed that coloured people did not drive big cars or wear suits or carry briefcases, that they seemed to look sad and cold."⁹⁵ Only the white British people are supposed to be successful while the black people end up doing jobs their white counterparts find inferior and poorly-paid. Leila comes to realize that the reality is completely different from what she expected and black people face discrimination in all areas of their life. She also realizes that her mother was not telling the whole truth in her letters not to make Leila worried about her. "The shock of what she had found made her wonder what else her mother had left unsaid."⁹⁶ A shock like this comes when Leila is looking for a house or flat for them. Before actually seeing the house, she signs the contract and pays the deposit. When they arrive there, they discover a house nearly falling apart. What is more, Michael blames Leila for having been deceived. "Leila stood at this junction and looked up at their home. Two of the upstairs window panes were broken in, and the door looked like it had been put together from the remains of a dozen forgotten doors. [...] The light switch did not work. The house was dark

⁹³ Ledent, *Caryl Phillips*, 25.

⁹⁴ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 155-156.

⁹⁵ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 121.

⁹⁶ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 151.

and smelled of neglect, and there were no curtains to open to let the light in, and there were no doors to prop open to let the air circulate.”⁹⁷ Her husband finds this accommodation indecent and unacceptable, however, he does not realize what effort Leila had to make and how difficult it was to find any place at all. He still seems to maintain his optimistic vision of the great opportunities that England has to offer to people like him. When Michael finds a job, he is told by his colleague that he is going to be treated very badly but he has to get used to this since it is a regular part of the black migrant’s life. He wants Michael to understand that there are no opportunities for coloured people in England and they have to face the bitter reality unless they intend to return to the Caribbean.

“Well, you better know. He’s a cunt and he’s going to call you names, man, and you going to behave like a kettle for without knowing it you going to boil. It’s how the white man in this country kills off the coloured man He makes you heat up and blow yourself away.”⁹⁸

Michael does not stay for long in this job and he decides to start his own business. They have a fierce argument with Leila about his plans since Leila despises Michael’s ability to make a living for the whole family. Michael feels insulted and underestimated and so he leaves Leila and their little son for good. Since then, Leila starts dreaming of going back home, feeling frustrated and isolated. She realizes that the whole England “project” was a huge mistake, that if she could not keep her husband back on the island, she was even less likely to keep him here. Simply said, all her illusions are shattered in a few months and she withdraws even from the people who tried to support her like her neighbour Mary. “But because of Leila’s paranoid distrust of all white women, their friendship aborts and so do all hopes of meaningful contacts with the outside world.”⁹⁹ She falls into a kind of apathy, she stops looking after the house and unlike in the beginning she puts all her hopes into returning home and leaving her irresponsible and unfaithful husband behind. Only now does she understand that the island at least offers the security of predicting her life from day to day as well as her two kind-hearted friends, Millie and Bradeth.

⁹⁷ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 161.

⁹⁸ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 168.

⁹⁹ Ledent, 32.

But first Leila would take a boat and leave Michael in this country among the people who seemed to keep him warm in mind and body. England, in whom she had placed so much of her hope, no longer held for her the attraction of her mother and new challenges. At least the small island she had left behind had safety and two friends, and if the price to be paid for this was a stern predictability from one day to the next then she was ready to pay it.¹⁰⁰

Although her England's stay has deprived Leila of her hopes as well as her self-esteem, it has also taught her that England is not the place where she belongs and that she is never going to understand white people.

Then Leila left England behind, not understanding this country in which a smile could mean six things at once, a nudge on a bus from a stranger either an accident or a prologue to a series of events that might actually lead to your destruction. In England people left bread on their doorsteps and dogs came and passed water on it, and in England it never rained good and hard.¹⁰¹

The novel evokes the coolness and greyness of England and its inhabitants as opposed to the warmth and cosiness of the Caribbean islands and people. "[...] there exists in England none of the spontaneous solidarity to be found in the rural Caribbean [...]"¹⁰²

At the end Leila reaches the highest level of despair as she is forced to admit that both her marriage and the journey to England were a failure and she did not manage to prove her mother's opinion on Michael to be wrong. Despite all the misfortune she experiences in England, she admits that her sons would visit England one day and they would probably learn the same lesson as she did and they would come back to her. She underlines the inability to explain or pass her own experience onto her sons since everyone has to live through it themselves.

When the time did come when her children would ask her questions she could not answer, she would take them down to the harbour and wait with them, as the ship lay

¹⁰⁰ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 203.

¹⁰¹ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 198.

¹⁰² Ledent, 27.

offshore, waiting. She would watch as they climbed into the small boat and made their way out to the ship and on to England to find a Michael, or men like him who might give them the answers they sought. She would continue to wait for them [...] knowing that being her boys [...] they would come back to her with the next tide. Then together, the three of them (mother, son, son) would make their way back to St Patrick's and sit and wait for night to fall, having finally, at the end of her day, shared something that she knew was beyond her or anyone else's explanation.¹⁰³

To sum up, Phillips's first novel deals with failed relationships both on a personal and a national level. This failure is illustrated using the story of Leila and Michael, a couple from the Caribbean who move to England to save their marriage but also to search for better opportunities. Nevertheless, their dysfunctional marriage breaks down completely as they have to struggle for survival, face racial hostility and live in terrible conditions. While Michael does not seem to grow up at all and he stays in England dreaming of success and recognition, Leila fully realizes the impact of her decision to move away from their homeland and she contemplates her return being aware that the only thing she could bring back is her failure. There is not a single character in the novel who would succeed in England. However, if one finds "failure" too strong and negative a term, we might conclude that Leila has learnt an important lesson and she can understand her identity better now. She even claims this experience to be inexplicable and she is ready to let her sons undergo the same journey when the time comes and try themselves what their mother once had to live through.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF PHILLIPS'S NOVEL *A STATE OF INDEPENDENCE*

There is always a tendency to compare a writer's first novel with the second one. Many critics and readers thought that Phillips's second novel would be a sequel to his first one since it had an ambiguous ending. Although the two novels have a lot in common, in his second novel Phillips has chosen a male protagonist's perspective and the primary concern here is his return to the island after spending twenty years in Britain. What follows is an analysis of the novel both from the formal and the psychological point of view. Subsequently, these two novels will be compared briefly.

¹⁰³ Phillips, *The Final Passage*, 204.

4.5.1 FORMAL ANALYSIS OF A *STATE OF INDEPENDENCE*

A State of Independence may be considered a return novel as far as its genre is concerned since it deals with a migrant's return to his native island at the dawn of its political independence. Even the title refers to this state of both political and psychological independence. The author, however, expresses his critical approach towards this controversial topic. Although the island (based on St Kitts) formally gains independence from Britain, not much really changes for the common inhabitants living in the countryside. The only people who seem to benefit from the independence are the corrupt politicians who live in luxury and who admire the United States at the moment. Therefore, it is actually one form of domination which is replaced by another. "It therefore comes as little surprise that far from being the sea change people expect, the independence from Britain should only be a handing over of domination from the former coloniser to the American corporate mafia and their local henchmen, Jackson Clayton to name but one."¹⁰⁴ Phillips suggests that the state of independence is a delusive concept and he criticizes the phenomenon of neo-colonialism based on the island's dependence on the USA.

Apart from the novel's title, it is interesting to observe the epigraph(s) which often gives us a key to a better understanding of the novel's message. The first epigraph is an extract from Marcus Garvey's speech in which he encourages the inhabitants of St Kitts to take the fate into their hands and not to let others do it for them. It is a kind of a prophetic warning that he pronounces.

It is only a jellyfish that comes into the world and passes off without anybody knowing it was here . . . make St Kitts your Garden of Eden. If you don't do it other men will do it for you. Your country can be no greater than yourselves . . .¹⁰⁵

The first epigraph is followed by two newspaper extracts illustrating the political debate in St Kitts and criticizing the two parties struggling for power over the island. Again he suggests the corruption of the political leaders and their personal interests at the expense of the island's inhabitants relying on them. The last epigraph manifests the failure of the dream pronounced in the first paragraph. It is a quotation of Jackson Clayton, Bertram's childhood friend and now a corrupt politician, who claims that the island is currently living State-side because it

¹⁰⁴ Ledent, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Phillips, *A State of Independence* (New York: Vintage International, 1986), 7.

has had enough of the British exploitation. “Well, what you must realize is that we are living State-side now. We living under the eagle and maybe you don’t think that is so good but your England never do us a damn thing except take, take, take.”¹⁰⁶

The novel’s setting starts on board of a plane heading towards an island in the Caribbean, very probably based on the author’s native island St Kitts. The protagonist, Bertram Francis arrives a few days before the independence is declared, therefore it can be assumed that it is year 1983. The novel thus spans a few days, however, the numerous flashbacks take us into Bertram’s childhood and also briefly into his stay in Britain. However, the novel’s story mainly deals with Bertram’s first days back “home” and how he is or is not accepted by his childhood’s friends as well as by his relatives.

As for the novel’s subject matter, it generally deals with the search for personal and national identity and with the search for a place that one could call “home”. It addresses the issue of one’s identity in exile as well as the feelings of displacement and detachment from a particular place, be it Britain or the Caribbean. The whole issue is very complex and Phillips aims at depicting not only the migrant’s experience in Britain (as in *The Final Passage*) but also the returnee’s experience back on his island (as in *A State of Independence*). The novel also portrays the impact of time on personal as well as national history and identity. The protagonist’s connection to his place of birth is very strong, however, he cannot expect to find exactly the same place and people as twenty years ago even though it seems to him that he left the place only yesterday. Last but not least, the novel depicts failed relationships on personal level: for instance Bertram’s relationship with his brother or with his mother, and on national level: between Bertram and his mother country which fails to accept him again.

The structure is again non-linear since the main storyline is interwoven with numerous flashbacks into Bertram’s childhood. The fragmented narrative is typical for Phillips since he wants to show the impact of one’s past on his/her present. The facts are seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Bertram Francis. The novel follows the life story of this man who has spent twenty years in England and decides to return to the Caribbean. The very first scene takes place on board of a plane flying to the island. We follow Bertram’s arrival and then his reflections on the island. While he was in England, he did not keep in touch with anybody in the island, not even with his mother. Bertram feels disappointed with his life in England and

¹⁰⁶ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 7.

he puts his hopes into a new start on the island.¹⁰⁷ While the inhabitants cannot wait to celebrate the island's coming independence, Bertram encounters rejection, hostility and distrust nearly everywhere he goes. Everyone and everything seems to have changed so much while he was away, including himself. Another formal technique Phillips already used in his first novel is the open/ambiguous ending. This time, the novel closes with Bertram contemplating his potential new life on the island despite all the difficulties and obstacles awaiting him. However, Phillips does not provide any clear conclusion, leaving Bertram torn between England and the Caribbean and at the same time leaving the reader to trouble their mind with it themselves.

Apart from the protagonist Bertram there are other characters playing a significant role in the novel and in Bertram's life. They are: Bertram's mother, his brother Dominic, Patsy Archibald (Bertram's childhood sweetheart) and Jackson Clayton (his childhood friend but also a lifelong rival, and now a corrupt political leader). The following section will be devoted to their brief presentation.

Bertram Francis, having spent twenty years in England, returns to his island at the age of thirty-nine and he expects to start a completely new life. Being naïve and confident, he plans to start a business despite not bringing with him almost any money to make his plans real. He expects his mother to be supportive and his childhood friend Jackson to help him succeed. What he does not realize though is the fact that he left the island two decades ago and he did not keep in touch with anyone. He basically comes to the island with the idea of making profit from the local economy which further underlines his self-centredness. "What he believes to be the independence conferred by his exile has only been deceptively achieved at the expense of other people, as his neglect of his family and his former desertion of Patsy indicate. Bertram's self-centredness is such that he is unable to assess the extent to which his uncaring behaviour might have affected people around him."¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, his stay soon teaches him a lesson and makes him think deeply not only about the society and family but also about himself. At the end he is willing to accept a mediocre life on the island and he intends to help his bed-bound mother.

¹⁰⁷ See Frank Birbalsingh, 184-185.

¹⁰⁸ Ledent, 49.

If we have a closer look at Bertram's family and his childhood about which we learn mainly from the flashbacks, we find out that he grew up with his mother and his younger brother, without their father though. Their mother prefers not to ever tell them the truth about who their he was or where he lived. As a result, Dominic, Bertram's younger brother, grows particularly attached to Bertram and he admires him almost like he would admire his father. "Because of their father's perpetual absence, Dominic had come to depend upon Bertram more than a younger brother would normally do."¹⁰⁹ However, as they both grow older, they also grow more distant from one another. Moreover, when Bertram wins a scholarship in England, Dominic feels emotionally wounded. When Bertram comes back to the island, he learns that his brother died in an accident. People say he used to drink too much and that he had affairs with married women. Bertram comes to realize he might be responsible for his brother's moral fall and his consequent death.

Bertram's mother also plays a crucial role in his coming to consciousness. She does not welcome him very warmly, on the contrary, she blames him for not keeping in touch with her and Dominic. She cannot forgive him for neglecting them both and for letting England forget where his home and family were. After their initial quarrel, his mother tells Bertram she does not want him in her house anymore. She feels too hurt by his behaviour as well as by Dominic's death for which she thinks Bertram is responsible. She cannot understand that Bertram did not probably keep in touch because he would have to admit his failure and that he simply felt ashamed.

"The only person that does not prove a disappointment is Patsy Archibald, Bertram's one-time lover, whom he ruthlessly left behind twenty years before."¹¹⁰ She is the only person who does not feel contempt for him and who is even happy to see him again. Patsy's house becomes the only place where Bertram feels welcome. Patsy gives an impression of a very intelligent woman since she understands the futility of the independence, she realizes that people still live in the same poverty as they did under the British rule and she sees through Jackson, their one-time common friend. There is one thing she does not say Bertram about – that they have a son together whose name is Livingstone. Bertram meets him at one point without knowing he might be his own son. Patsy also wonders if Bertram is going to settle on

¹⁰⁹ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 34.

¹¹⁰ Ledent, 41.

the island permanently. We might assume that to a certain extent he inclines to stay thanks to Patsy and the vision of their common future.

A clearly negative character in the novel is Jackson Clayton. From the flashbacks we are able to follow his growing up from an ambitious young boy to a politically and morally corrupt politician following only his own interests at the expense of everyone else around him. In their schooldays, Bertram and Jackson compete for the scholarship which Bertram wins in the end. “Why he was sitting the examination was a mystery to many, though of course most expected him to take the scholarship, he being somebody who seemed destined to succeed at anything he put his hand or mind to.”¹¹¹ While Bertram does not finish his law studies in England, he ends up taking different kinds of jobs and the only thing he brings back to the island is his failure, Jackson becomes a big man meanwhile, occupying the post of a deputy prime minister. Still perceiving Bertram as a lifelong rival, he decides to take his revenge on him by highlighting his own achievements and by humiliating him constantly and persuading him he does not belong to the island anymore. A person who used to be a friend some time ago now appears to be a lethal enemy. At first, Bertram expects Jackson to help him set up a business, however, he almost immediately realizes that he has chosen the wrong person to ask for a favour.

4.5.2 MIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN A *STATE OF INDEPENDENCE*

Bertram Francis, the novel's protagonist, is a prototype of a returnee migrant. He represents a whole body of people who also feel caught between two worlds, unable to fit in either of them. In general, migrants who decide to return to their home country end up feeling alienated, displaced and frustrated, feeling like strangers in their own country. They come with an idealized vision of their country of birth in mind but they do not realize how huge the impact of time is on people as well as places. They often appear trapped in a vicious circle which forces them to keep moving in order to find a place where they would belong after all.

Bertram leaves the Caribbean for England as a young boy to pursue his studies in law. Nevertheless, he does not succeed in obtaining his degree in this field and he has to find a job. Like other black migrants in Britain, he has to accept low-paid unskilled jobs. Meanwhile, he

¹¹¹ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 29.

does not keep in touch with his family or friends and neither does he visit his island. At first, he intended to stay only a few years, however, after having spent twenty years in the hostile and racist British society and achieving nothing at all, he finally decides to go back to the island and try to set up a business there. With these idealized and naïve thoughts in mind, he gets on a plane and returns “home” after two decades spent abroad. However, he did not make this decision in a day, at times he had been apprehensive about this journey but his memories of and attachment to the place and people made him go. “There had been moments in the last twenty years when he felt sure he would never have the courage or the means to set foot once again on his island.”¹¹² The very first encounter with a taxi driver on the island makes him feel worried since he is warned not to expect people to adapt to him now that he is back. He realizes that he might be treated like a foreigner, having spent a considerable amount of time in England and having adopted different behavioural patterns.

“I know why you’re trying to rush me, but remember you’re back home now and things do move differently here. I’m often picking up fellars who been living in England and America and all them places, and they coming back here like we must adjust to their pace rather than it’s they who must remember just who it is they dealing with once they reach back.”¹¹³

He feels even a more bitter disappointment when he meets his mother for the first time after his arrival. Not only does she laugh at his ambitious plans of setting up a business on the island but she tells him about his brother’s death in a way that Bertram understands she blames it on him. Later on he tries hard to persuade his mother that he has not changed in England and that he just could not make it home sooner. Unfortunately, he does not manage to make his mother understand what he has lived through during those twenty years.

“I just couldn’t study the course so I took work and one thing led to another. To me it just seems like two or three years, not twenty. [...] England just take me over. New things start to happen to me, new people, like I was born again and everything is fresh. But it’s only today walking about Sandy Bay and Baytown that I can see that maybe I was born again the same fellar. Nothing happened to me in England, you can believe

¹¹² Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 27.

¹¹³ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 17.

that? A big rich country like that don't seem to have make any impression on me. I might as well have left yesterday for I just waste off all that time.”¹¹⁴

As Bertram wanders around the island he also notices that not much has changed in the countryside apart from a few technical improvements unlike in the capital where politicians live in luxurious mansions. “Nothing much seemed to have changed in the country, but then he imagined that Jackson almost certainly lived in Baytown now and the differences that had always existed between country and town had simply become more marked.”¹¹⁵ Seeing that the opportunities are no better than they were twenty years ago and that his one-time friend Jackson is now a too important person to bother with someone like him, his dreams of a better life are gradually falling apart. Despite all the hostility he encounters, he still feels attached to the house, to the village, to the people. The only person who is willing to accept Bertram and listen to him attentively is his former girlfriend Patsy who is still living in the same house, alone. They even start an intimate relationship again after a twenty-year separation. Patsy's house is the only place where Bertram feels welcome. “The ease with which he fell back into her arms alarmed him, but at least someone had finally accepted him with unqualified joy.”¹¹⁶ It is not until a fierce quarrel with Jackson that Bertram starts to question his relationship to the island. Jackson claims that things have changed considerably while he was away and that he should go back to England because that is where he belongs now. He simply wants to take revenge on Bertram for having lost the scholarship by getting rid of him for good. He knows he is in a position when he can tell people what to do and he now only associates with people of the same social status.

“England is where you belong now. Things have changed too much for you to have any chance of fitting back, so why you don't return to the place where you know how things are? [...] You English West Indians should just come back here to retire and sit in the sun. Don't waste your time trying to get into the fabric of the society for you're made of the wrong material for the modern Caribbean.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 85.

¹¹⁵ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 114.

¹¹⁶ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 91.

¹¹⁷ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 136.

Instead of facilitating Bertram's reintegration by using his position and helping him find a well-paid and decent job, he turns his back on him and shows his contempt openly. All this negative and even traumatic experience makes Bertram question his identity and sense of belonging. He admits that he feels at home neither in England nor on the island since he did not manage to integrate to the British society but he does not seem to fit back in the Caribbean either. He feels torn between the two countries, unable to decide if he should go back to England or stay in the Caribbean and do his best to settle down again and try to get accepted. "He tried hard to imagine how he might cope, were he to make peace with his own mediocrity and settle back on the island."¹¹⁸ Although the novel does not provide a definite and clear ending, it seems that Bertram has decided to stay permanently and he would like to make up for the years of neglecting his family by looking after his mother. "And then he walked on and wondered if later this same day he should ask Mrs Sutton how he might help his mother."¹¹⁹

At this point it is relevant to examine the phenomenon of return migration a little more closely. The information provided in this section should be related to the novel in one way or another. First of all it is worth mentioning a few pull factors, factors which make migrants return to their home country. Most often there are two main factors: one is negative experience in the metropolitan society (in this case Britain) or the desire to return home because the migrant is attached to the home country, to its climate, to their family etc. A combination of both factors is possible and would provoke a stronger tendency to return.

Migrant motives for return to the English speaking Caribbean have included strong family ties in the home country, dissatisfaction with present social status or conditions (especially in Canada, the United States or Britain), obligation to relatives, feelings of loyalty, guilt for living abroad, patriotism, perception of better opportunities opening up in the Caribbean and nostalgia.¹²⁰

There certainly are a large number of factors which pull migrants back to their home country and in case of Bertram in Phillips's novel the dominant factors seem to be the dissatisfaction

¹¹⁸ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 157.

¹¹⁹ Phillips, *A State of Independence*, 158.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Thomas Hope, *Freedom and Constraint in Caribbean Migration and Diaspora* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2008), 166.

with his life in England as well as nostalgia for the Caribbean which is reinforced by his loneliness in England. Bertram does not fit either of the major categories of return migrants since these are usually people who return after a few months or at most a few years or people at retirement age. Bertram spends twenty years in Britain and not having succeeded he returns to the island, full of ambitions and plans for a new life. However, returnees often find it extremely difficult to reintegrate into the society they once left. Their idealized expectations and illusions are shattered as they are commonly identified with the foreign country and they are regarded as foreigners in their own country of origin. Again, there are certain factors influencing successful reintegration such as the length of stay in the receiving country (for instance Britain) and maintaining links with the home country (for instance by making visits during the stay abroad). There are many more factors but these two are suitable for our purpose. "Length of stay abroad, the returnee's stage in the lifecycle, their socio-economic status and their access to resources on return all affect reentry. Those who have stayed abroad a long time without making return visits in between find it difficult to reintegrate."¹²¹ The last sentence of the quote is directly related to Bertram's case. Having stayed in England for as long as twenty years and maintaining no links at all with his relatives or friends back on the island, it is no surprise that he finds his reintegration extremely challenging. Like many other migrants, he comes home with idealized and even naïve expectations which he has to reconsider to be able to make sense of his new life and identity. It is him who has to adjust to the island's pace and accept the changes that have taken place during his long absence.

As has been previously mentioned, it is worth comparing Phillips's first two novels since they share at least their subject matter: migrant experience in general. One aspect which contrasts the two novels at first sight is the opposite direction of migration and the gender of their protagonists. In *The Final Passage* the female protagonist Leila and her family leave the Caribbean to live in England while the male protagonist Bertram from *A State of Independence* moves from England back to the Caribbean. If we take a closer look at the two novels we can find more similarities and differences than these two apparent ones.

In both novels migration to England is associated with better opportunities and a new start. Neither Leila nor Bertram manage to succeed though. Their illusions are shattered, they experience bitter disappointment in the hostile British society and they plan their return home.

¹²¹ Elizabeth Thomas Hope, 170.

Leila's disillusionment is even worse since she is abandoned by her husband and her mother dies, therefore England becomes associated with great pain for her. In a way, *A State of Independence* might be considered a sequel to Phillips's first novel but only a loose sequel. After having spent a few harsh months in England, Leila contemplates coming back to the Caribbean and Bertram, although his story is different from Leila's in many ways, actually returns home and the reader primarily follows his new life back on the island. At the same time, Bertram seems to have a lot in common with Leila's husband Michael as they both behave in an irresponsible and self-centred manner. Once they are in England, they seem to forget their responsibilities and family ties completely. From Bertram's experience we might even deduce how Michael is going to end. The male characters' coming into consciousness and growing up takes much longer than that of their female counterparts. Nevertheless, what all the migrants (migrants to Britain or return migrants to the Caribbean) in Phillips's first two novels undoubtedly share is arriving with high expectations which never get fulfilled. Their journey which is also a spiritual quest for identity only seems to cause their alienation and uprootedness. Instead of making sense of their selves, they become torn between two countries feeling at home in neither of them.

While *The Final Passage* addresses the issue of leaving one's country of origin and settling in Britain, *A State of Independence* primarily focuses on the protagonist's homecoming after twenty years in Britain. On the other hand both migration to Britain and return migration are actually two sides of the same coin.

Exile and homecoming are indissociable because they proceed from a similar desire to begin one's life anew and both unavoidably lead to the same kind of disenchantment aroused by the confrontation with the realities of the world that has fed one's hopes for so long, be it England for the emigrant or the Caribbean in case of the returnee.¹²²

Homecoming may surprisingly be even more traumatizing experience than exile as we could see in Bertram's case. Another aspect which deserves our attention is the contrast between male and female protagonists in Phillips's novels. While female protagonists are mature, responsible and rather down-to-earth, their male counterparts never really seem to grow up from their naivety and easy-going approach to life. Both Leila and Patsy from Phillips's first two novels embody this practicality and sensibility, their respective partners Michael and

¹²² Ledent, 42.

Bertram, on the other hand, embody self-centredness, immaturity and naivety. It is interesting though, that Phillips choses a female perspective in his first novel and then switches to an entirely male perspective in his second novel. It may be due to his ambition to offer a double perspective in his works.

To summarize, Phillips's first two novels fall into the category of migrant writing by addressing the issue of identity and the anxiety of belonging which all characters seem to share in general. In both novels, Phillips uses the technique of narrative fragmentation in order to illustrate the state of mind of his protagonists, that of displacement and unbelonging. His early works also combine historical, psychological and critical dimension. Phillips likes to use historical events to explore their impact upon the characters' lives and especially upon their psyche but also to express his critical view of various political and social issues. Phillips's own position of a Caribbean-born man brought up in Britain and maintaining regular links with St Kitts in his adulthood enables him to see the migrant's experience from within and without. As Phillips himself admits: "I think it would be impossible or, at the very best, extremely difficult for me to address the situation in Britain only. To limit myself to Britain only for my subject matter would make me a protest writer, merely an extension of the university sociology faculty, which would prevent me from being seen as a writer *per se*."¹²³ He gives voice to the Caribbean experience by highlighting the complexity of the Caribbean history and the heterogeneity of its population. He wants Britain to recognize that the Caribbean history is actually a part of its own national history. "That Caribbean migrants are also part of Britishness and British history is a recognition for which he is ready to fight, not only in memory of the suffering of his people [...] but also out of respect for all those who will never have the opportunity to be heard."¹²⁴ In spite of the fact that Phillips has spent a considerable part of his life in Britain, he still feels strongly attached to St Kitts (the island of his birth) and defending of members of his native society clearly demonstrates his sympathetic engagement with the Caribbean and its inhabitants.

¹²³ Birbalsingh, 187.

¹²⁴ Ledent, 177.

5. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Phillips's novels *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence* reflect on Phillips's first-hand experience or that of his parents. In the 1950s his family was among the large number of migrants heading for Britain. His parents were both just in their twenties and bringing their little son with them, they were hoping for a better future for them all. In his adulthood, Phillips felt he needed to travel, so he travelled round Europe, in the Caribbean, to Africa and last but not least to the USA where he currently works as a university lecturer. He felt that if he travelled extensively and visited his parents' as well as his ancestors' homelands, he would better understand his own identity. Therefore, he both migrated to Britain (as a little child with his parents) and he returned to the Caribbean and keeps returning there on a regular basis. It is thus clear that his first two novels are based on his experience to a certain extent. In order to get a better insight into the message of Phillips's novels, one should read his non-fiction works, namely his essays as they are said to be complementary to each other. Before tracing the autobiographical elements in the two novels, it is worth noting that Phillips himself admits that his works reflect on his own experience, moreover they help him come to terms with his own sense of self. When describing his characters as alienated, abandoned and in a constant search for a place to belong, he identifies with them at the same time. "I have grown to understand that I am, of course, writing about myself in some oblique, though not entirely unpredictable, way."¹²⁵

To begin with, the setting of both novels is more or less based on Phillips's island of birth – St Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean. While *The Final Passage* takes place partly in Britain and partly on the island, *A State of Independence* is focused on the island of St Kitts. The former deals with exile whereas the latter addresses the experience of homecoming both of which are familiar to Phillips. Like Bertram Francis, Phillips visits his island of birth after spending about twenty years in Britain, however, his stay is only temporary unlike Bertram's who finally decides to stay for good.

Crucial though the initial move to Britain and the later visit to the United States may have been, a further journey, and the culture shock it produced, seem to have radically shaped Phillips's career: in 1980s, for the first time since 1958, he went back to the island of his birth, accompanied by his mother. This return gave a decisive impetus to

¹²⁵ Caryl Phillips, *A New World Order* (London: Secker and Warburg, 2001), 305.

his artistic vocation because it revealed to him more clearly than ever the complexity, thus richness, of his identity.¹²⁶

However, Phillips was brought to Britain by his parents as a little child and he returned the island with his mother while Bertram went to Britain in order to pursue his studies leaving his family behind and not keeping in touch with anyone back home for twenty years. Therefore, Bertram's story does not copy Phillips's experience; both of them returned to their place of birth after a long time though.

In terms of the characters, the events in *The Final Passage* are narrated by a female character – Leila, *The State of Independence's* main protagonist is a man called Bertram Francis. Phillips often examines the male-female relationship in his novels. As has been said, the male characters are usually irresponsible and immature. Both Bertram and Michael abandon their women. Michael's abandonment of Leila seems to take its source in Phillips's mother's abandonment by her husband (and his father) in Britain. Moreover, as if reflecting on his own fatherless childhood, characters in Phillips's first two novels do not ever meet their father. Leila's mother never talks to her about her father similarly to Bertram who sadly meets his father at his funeral for the first time. Another trait Bertram shares with Phillips is their return migration to the Caribbean although Bertram decides to settle permanently unlike Phillips who only visits temporarily.

When it comes to the subject matter of Phillips's early fiction works, his main preoccupation is the question of identity and belonging and the endless search for home, a place where one feels welcome. This issue does not obviously preoccupy only Phillips's works but his personal life as well. Born in St Kitts, brought up and educated in Britain and currently moving between Britain, St Kitts and the United States, Phillips is a clear example of a cultural hybrid who feels caught somewhere between Africa of his ancestors, the Caribbean of his birth and Britain where he has lived since an early age, feeling at home in none of these places though. His experience might remind us of Bertram's from *A State of Independence*.

I left the island twenty-two years ago as a four-month-old infant. I look now at the island of my birth. I recognise the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong. I am

¹²⁶ Ledent, 3-4.

of, and not of, this place. [...] I am seven years old in the north of England; too late to be coloured, but too soon to be British. I recognise the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong. I am of, and not of, this place.¹²⁷

Although Phillips has spent a major part of his life in Britain, he still feels strongly attached to the island of his birth and even to Africa, the homeland of his ancestors. Another important motif in his novels is that of migration as a constant movement from one place to another. Phillips himself has always felt the urge to travel in order to find his place in the society and make sense of his own identity.

There is a long tradition of writers from Britain who have found it necessary to travel. In many respects this tradition of departure, and sometimes return, was at its most furious during the period of empire and colonisation when countless British writers sought to define themselves, and their country, by travelling and encountering strange others who might, to some extent, affirm their sense of their own place in the global scheme of things.¹²⁸

Most characters in Phillips's novels share with him the anxiety of belonging versus not belonging. The process of travelling may sometimes become a vicious circle when one keeps moving from one place to another in search of better opportunities. This may eventually lead to the feelings of displacement and rootlessness. Phillips offers three possible solutions to this problem: stay and live in anxiety; make plans to leave or create an imaginary home. He has chosen the last option for himself. "Some people have little choice but to live in this state of high anxiety. Some others hurry to make plans to leave. I have chosen to create for myself an imaginary "home" to live alongside the one I am incapable of fully trusting. My increasingly precious, imaginary, Atlantic world."¹²⁹

Looking more closely at Phillips's first novel *The Final Passage*, we can assume that Leila's and Michael's journey to England represents Phillips's parents' journey back in the 1950s. Both couples being in their early twenties came to Britain full of hope and expectations for a better life.

¹²⁷ Caryl Phillips, *A New World Order*, 40.

¹²⁸ Caryl Phillips, *Colour Me English* (London: Harville Secker, 2011), 124.

¹²⁹ Phillips, *A New World Order*, 308.

My parents arrived in Leeds towards the end of the fifties, carrying me as hand luggage. They had heard that opportunities for employment were greater in the North of England, and somewhere at the back of their minds they hoped that should they find work and make a home then perhaps, one day, it might be possible for their son to achieve an education in this northern city.¹³⁰

However, Phillips's parents had had an idea about life in England before they moved there. They heard about it from their relatives and friends who lived there at some point and most of whom finally returned to the Caribbean. Unlike them Phillips's parents decided to endure discrimination and racism mainly because of their son and his future life. In the following extract from Phillips's essay describing his parents' journey to England, we immediately realize the resemblance to Leila's and Michael's "final passage".

On 6 July 1958, after a tedious and often fearful journey across the Atlantic in the lower cabins of a cargo ship, my parents, both of whom were in their early twenties, stepped ashore at Newhaven and looked around them. They had arrived from the West Indies, and finally they were in Britain. I am sure that they both harboured different dreams of how they wished their new British lives to unfold, and the evidence of their acrimonious divorce a few years later would seem to confirm this. Nearly fifty years ago, on an English summer morning, they stepped ashore – my mother holding me in her arms, my father no doubt already scheming as to what mischief he might get up to. Ostensibly the pair of them had little reason to feel apprehensive about this new world.¹³¹

Like Phillips's mother, Leila is also abandoned by her husband, however, after spending several months in Britain, she decides to go back to the island with her little son Calvin (who might stand for little Phillips himself) while Phillips's mother stays and brings up her son in Britain by herself. Leila may have well been modelled on Phillips's mother while the irresponsible and drunk Michael might be based on Phillips's own father who also left the family on their own.

¹³⁰ Phillips, *Colour Me English*, 117.

¹³¹ Phillips, *Colour Me English*, 305.

In *A State of Independence* Phillips shows the return migrant's experience as well as his criticism of the American influence over St Kitts after the independence through the eyes of the protagonist Bertram Francis. Bertram comes to Britain in order to pursue his studies in law, however, he does not succeed and is forced to do all kinds of jobs to survive. One day he decides to return to his island expecting to start a new and a more successful life there. Phillips, on the other hand, does not leave England because he fails there but rather because he wishes to trace his roots and reunite with his relatives; and mainly he does not leave England for good. Through the character of Bertram he wants to convey the feelings of a migrant returning "home" but encountering only indifference and even antipathy and contempt from the people he used to consider as family and friends. Phillips appears to sympathise with Bertram since he can very well imagine how he feels. Phillips himself has experienced the feelings of displacement and alienation both in Britain and in the Caribbean and he finds his "home" somewhere in the Atlantic, at the intersection of Britain, Caribbean and Africa. He also uses the figure of Bertram to express his doubts about the independence of St Kitts which he finds illusory since in his opinion, the island has just replaced one form of domination by another. Moreover, he condemns the political corruption which has expanded on the island. In spite of all his criticism, Phillips is still positively engaged with his native island and keeps coming regularly.

In general, Phillips deals with migrant experience describing what kind of treatment migrants receive in England. He grew up in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s which means during the period of racial riots and violence in several British cities, especially former slave ports. He underlines Britain's inability to come to terms with its changing nature in the second half of the twentieth century. During these several decades Britain lost its power and underwent sweeping economic and social changes. British identity was insecure and massive immigration from former colonies made the situation even worse from the British perspective. The problem with Britain seems to be that it has always defined itself from the racial point of view, which means based on the colour of a person's skin and being British has become a synonym to being white. Although migrants from the West Indies are culturally close to the British and they can speak English fluently, they are never meant to belong in Britain since the colour of their skin is regarded as a sort of a curse.

In other words, to many white Britons these Caribbean migrants were uncomfortably and surprisingly British, and in order properly to exclude them and reinforce their

alien status white Britons needed to accentuate the one aspect of their identity which these people could do nothing about – their race – which, of course, accounts for the perversely physiological racism to which Caribbean migrants were subjected.¹³²

Nevertheless, Phillips perceives migration to Britain as a positive phenomenon making a priceless social and cultural contribution to the British society and making Britain realize they cannot deny their colonial past and neither can they ignore these people who see it as kind of “home”. Moreover, if migrants stay in Britain and fight for their place in the society, they actually help Britain come to terms with its multicultural nature. While the first generation of migrants (Phillips’s parents’ generation) quietly accepted the treatment they received, the second generation already claimed their rights and thanks to all these generations the situation is gradually improving for migrants and their descendants. Phillips has made a remarkable contribution to the British literary canon by openly addressing migrant experience. He offers a dual perspective since he does not limit the setting of his works to Britain only. He feels comfortable in both cultures and he likes the idea that he can play an intermediary between Britain and the Caribbean. By introducing autobiographical elements in his works, he increases their authenticity. Phillips is not only original by the choice of subject matter, but he also employs specific formal techniques such as intertextuality or disjointed narrative. He focuses neither on characters nor on subject matter, he rather intends to portray individual experience which readers could identify with or at least think about. Being so young and having already produced such immense work, he deservedly belongs to mainstream British literature and he accepts this position to be able to bring into it innovation and change. He also feels proud to be the spokesman of all his fellow West Indians in Britain who were not as lucky as him in achieving so much and becoming popular even among white British (and not only British) readership. Characters in Phillips’s novels are often the underprivileged, the poor and the mistreated. Interestingly, none of the characters in his first two novels succeed in Britain or in the Caribbean despite his own success and achievement. As soon as he graduated from university, he immediately started to make a living by writing and he gradually worked his way up to become an original and a widely recognized British author of Caribbean origin.

¹³² Phillips, *A New World Order*, 273.

The aim of this thesis was to introduce and demonstrate the West Indian experience in Britain by means of exploring migrant writing in English written by Caribbean authors. Caryl Phillips and his first two novels have been selected as outstanding examples of this genre. Since Phillips was born in the West Indies but brought up and educated in Britain and since he currently travels between Britain, the USA and the Caribbean, he is entitled to address the issues of identity and (not) belonging. His characters are frequently displaced, isolated and torn between the country of their birth, the host country (Britain in this case) and the homeland of their ancestors (Africa). Like Phillips himself, they feel the urge to move from one place to another to find a place where they could finally settle and lead a peaceful and meaningful life. Although Phillips has achieved a major literary success, the protagonists of his first two novels keep wandering and they never really achieve anything. He never provides a ready-made conclusion since his novels often end in an ambiguous way.

The first chapter presented a historical, sociological and demographic perspective of the phenomenon of West Indian migration to Britain. We need to understand when, how and for what reason West Indian had started coming in large numbers in Britain since 1948. The arrival of Windrush triggered a massive influx of migrants which continued up to the early 1960s when the anti-immigrant policy was launched. The chapter further follows the lives of these migrants in a new country they considered so long to be a sort of their “mother country”. They had come with high expectations of which eventually stayed only shattered illusions. Having had to face systematic discrimination in all fields of life, their self-confidence was undermined and their identity insecure. As a result, most migrants put the hope into their return, however, many of them simply could not afford it. West Indian migrants often ended up doing poorly-paid and unskilled jobs and living in terrible housing conditions. The situation seems to be slowly improving these days, nevertheless all those years of racial violence and terror cannot be easily forgotten.

The following chapters are already devoted to the literary portrayal of West Indian migrant experience. As a representative of this movement, we have chosen Caryl Phillips, a young and promising British writer of West Indian origin. Before familiarising the reader with this writer and his early works in particular, Anglophone Caribbean literature has been introduced. However, if we want to provide a definition of Caribbean literature in general, we discover it is a complicated matter. We come across a number of various criteria which could be considered such as the language of the work, the origin of the author, subject matter, etc. It

is therefore complicated to decide which author still belongs and which one does not. A brief overview of the Caribbean poetry in English has been included as well. Phillips's biography can facilitate our understanding of his works since he often includes details of his own life. It is also advised that his novels be read together with his essays (or other non-fiction works). Phillips has undoubtedly achieved a major success with his works due to his diligence, talent, originality and his ability of empathy.

The very last chapter analyses in depth Phillips's two early fiction pieces, namely *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence* since these two novels brilliantly capture the omnipresent issue of identity and belonging. Both of them follow the lives of characters who are displaced in one way or another. *A State of Independence* might be even considered a very loose sequel to *The Final Passage* as it is almost entirely set in St Kitts (an island in the Caribbean) and its protagonist is a forty-year-old returnee migrant who learns that he belongs neither to Britain nor to the Caribbean which he left as a schoolboy. Protagonists of both his novels have to face disillusionment with the bitter reality be it in Britain or in the Caribbean. They decide to move and leave their previous lives behind only to find out that a better life does not await them in the new place but the opposite. Phillips's early novels are very insightful and impressive and they teach us a lot about people whose experience we would not like to live through.

RÉSUMÉ

Diplomová práce se zabývá zkušeností karibských přistěhovalců do Británie, postupně představuje historii karibské imigrace, charakteristiku karibské komunity žijící v britské metropoli a v dalších větších městech. Důraz je kladen na jejich převážně negativní zkušenost, která je dána všudypřítomnými projevy rasismu a diskriminace a která brání procesu jejich integrace do britské společnosti. Dále je představena anglicky psaná karibská literatura, její zástupci a témata jejich děl. Jako hlavní představitel karibské literatury byl zvolen britský spisovatel karibského původu, Caryl Phillips. Analyzujeme jeho dvě románové prvotiny *The Final Passage* a *A State of Independence*, které nám přibližují osudy karibských migrantů, ať už těch, kteří míří do Británie, nebo těch, kteří se vrací z Británie zpět do Karibiku.

Ve druhé kapitole je nastíněna historie imigrace z bývalých britských kolonií v Karibiku do Británie, obzvláště ve druhé polovině dvacátého století. V druhé části kapitoly je potom stručně charakterizována karibská komunita žijící v Británii. V průběhu 17. a 18. století dochází k rozsáhlé kolonizaci karibských ostrovů evropskými mocnostmi, vedle Británie to jsou především Francie, Nizozemí a Španělsko. Británie na ostrovech zavádí obchod s otroky, které nechává přivážet z Afriky a kteří tvrdě pracují na ostrovních plantážích. Británie po několik staletí ekonomicky vykořisťuje tato území a jejich původní i nepůvodní obyvatelé. Zároveň jsou obyvatelé utiskováni i z kulturního hlediska tím, že jsou vychováváni a manipulováni tak, aby obdivovali vše, co je britské a svou kulturu a historii tak vytěsnili. Dominantní postavení Britského impéria však postupně zažívá výrazné oslabení. V roce 1833 je zrušeno otroctví, i když na mnohých místech tyto praktiky pokračují i poté. Světové války doslova zlomily Británii vaz a impérium se tak postupně rozpadá v několika fázích, během nichž se kolonie osamostatňují a odpojují.

Klíčovým bodem v historii imigrace z karibských ostrovů do Británie je rok 1948 a příjezd lodi *Empire Windrush*, na které přijíždí bezmála pět set přistěhovalců, kteří jsou v následujícím desetiletí následováni svými krajany. Vádkami oslabená Británie doslova láká obyvatele svých bývalých kolonií na pracovní příležitosti. Potřebuje jednoduše obnovit ekonomickou stabilitu a zaplnit mezery na pracovním trhu. Imigranti však netuší, že volné jsou zejména manuální pracovní pozice, o které sami Britští občané nemají zájem. Karibští přistěhovalci podnikají tuto náročnou cestu s vizí lepších příležitostí a lepšího životního standardu jak pro sebe, tak pro své potomky. Jejich sen se však brzy mění v noční můru. Jsou

systematicky znevýhodnění v oblasti bydlení, vzdělání i zaměstnání. Každodenně se setkávají s projevy diskriminace a s rasovými předsudky, které jsou založeny na negativních stereotypch. Přistěhovalci tmavé pleti jsou považováni za podřazenou rasu nízké inteligence a primitivní kultury. Počáteční slovní napadání brzy vyústí ve fyzické násilí a pouliční nepokoje. Legislativa omezující imigraci z určitých oblastí spolu s předpojatostí policie situaci rozhodně nenapomáhají. Přistěhovalci prakticky nemají na koho se obrátit, a proto začínají vznikat nejrůznější organizace, které mají za úkol vymáhat jejich práva. Potomci přistěhovalců, kteří se narodili v Británii nebo zde vyrůstali od útlého věku, přirozeně považují Británii za svou rodnou zemi a předpokládají, že britská společnost tento fakt bude akceptovat a respektovat. Na rozdíl od svých rodičů jsou připraveni si své místo ve společnosti vydobýt i násilnými prostředky.

Zajímavým jevem typickým pro první generaci přistěhovalců je migrace zpět do Karibiku. Imigranti totiž často přicházejí do Británie s vizí brzkého návratu do své rodné země. Plánují, že až získají dostatečné množství finančních prostředků, prožijí zbytek svého života tam, odkud prvně přišli. Spousta z nich také posílá pravidelně část výdělků svým rodinám a příbuzným, kteří zůstali na ostrově. Většina přistěhovalců však zjišťuje, že finanční prostředky, které v Británii vydělají, jim stěží stačí na přežití a tak se jejich sen o návratu do rodné země nadobro rozplyne.

Druhá část téže kapitoly je věnována profilu karibské komunity v Británii z hlediska sociologického a demografického. Co se týče zaměstnanosti, bydlení a vzdělání, karibská komunita čelí obdobným problémům jako ostatní etnické menšiny, například vysoké nezaměstnanosti, která je vyšší než u obyvatel bílé pleti. Těm šťastnějším z nich se podaří sehnat zaměstnání, které však zdaleka neodpovídá jejich vzdělání a dovednostem a které je finančně podhodnoceno ve srovnání s platy zbytku britské populace.

Ani v případě bydlení se situace příliš neliší: karibští imigranti, kteří se chtějí dlouhodobě nebo trvale usadit mají veliký problém sehnat byt i podnájem. Většina pronajímajících dokonce vyvěšuje cedule s jasně rasovým podtextem. Přistěhovalci se tak musejí spokojit s velice chatrným bydlením zejména na předměstí. Z tohoto špatného stavu bydlení a z jeho hygienických nedostatků často vznikají zdravotní problémy, a to zejména u malých dětí. V případě vzdělání jsou děti přistěhovalců, které navštěvují britské školy, vystavovány negativním rasovým předsudkům jak ze strany spolužáků, tak bohužel i ze strany

pedagogů. Jsou běžně a bez jakéhokoli opodstatnění považovány za méně nadané a méně inteligentní než děti bílých rodičů. Toto soustavné podryvání jejich sebedůvěry může ve výsledku způsobit horší prospěch, který pak mnohým z nich brání v dalším úspěšném studiu.

Z demografického hlediska jsou karibští imigranti koncentrováni zejména ve velkých městech, což souvisí s nabídkou volných pracovních míst v době jejich příchodu do Británie. Na rozdíl od ostatních etnických menšin se karibská populace v Británii zmenšuje, což pravděpodobně souvisí s nízkou porodností a s vysokou mírou zpětné migrace do Karibiku. Na druhou stranu jsou v případě karibské komunity daleko častější smíšená manželství (např. karibská žena a britský muž nebo obráceně). Z pohledu genderového zastoupení v karibské komunitě mírně převládají ženy.

Nedílnou součástí karibské komunity žijící na britském území je její svérázná a specifická kulturní tradice. Tato společná kultura zpočátku přispívala ke stmelování karibských obyvatel a také plnila funkci obrannou. Bohatá tradice pouličních karnevalů a festivalů původně sloužila jako prostředek veřejných protestů. Tyto karnevaly doprovázené hlasitou a rytmickou hudbou, barevnými kostýmy a tancem si poměrně rychle získaly oblibu i u britských obyvatel, pro které tyto akce představovaly příjemné zpestření a kulturní obohacení. Kulturní projevy určité komunity navíc často poskytují klíč k jejímu porozumění. Díky osobnosti jamajského muzikanta Boba Marleyho se dodnes těší velké oblibě zejména u mladého britského obyvatelstva takové hudební žánry jako reggae, ska či kalypso. Naproti tomu karibská kuchyně nemá tak silnou tradici jako například kuchyně čínská nebo indická.

Cílem třetí kapitoly je zasadit osobnost Caryl Phillipse do širšího kontextu karibské literatury psané v anglickém jazyce. Je tedy zapotřebí vymezit pojem anglofonní karibské literatury, seznámit čtenáře s autory řazenými do tohoto proudu a představit jednoho z nich detailněji. Caryl Phillips je v současné době považován za představitele hlavního proudu britské literatury a my se zde pokoušíme objasnit, proč tomu tak je a jaký je jeho konkrétní přínos. Závěrečná kapitola je pak věnována dvěma jeho románovým prvotinám, které velice působivě a věrně zobrazují zkušenost karibských přistěhovalců jak v Británii, tak zpět na karibských ostrovech.

Existuje hned několik definic karibské literatury, ale žádná z nich se nezdá být uspokojivá. Lze ji totiž definovat na základě většího množství kritérií, jako například z hlediska tématu, autorova původu, cílového čtenáře nebo jazyka, ve kterém je dílo napsáno

(v případě karibské literatury obecně). Někteří autoři karibského původu se totiž věnují tématům, která naprosto nesouvisejí s karibskou zkušeností a naopak, o karibské zkušenosti mohou psát autoři nekaribského původu. Ačkoli anglicky psaná karibská literatura zažila největší rozkvět ve druhé polovině dvacátého století, její vznik datujeme už do osmnáctého století, kdy mezi nejrozšířenější žánry patřily: vyprávění otroků, paměti, autobiografie a dopisy. I v současné době je karibská literatura do značné míry autobiografická. V padesátých a šedesátých letech dvacátého století se velká spousta autorů, kteří imigrovali do Británie, rozhodla podělit o svou zkušenost (převážně negativní) prostřednictvím svých literárních děl. Během těchto dvou desetiletí se dominantním tématem stala migrace a její dopad na život přistěhovalců v nové zemi. Někteří autoři se vracejí k historickým tématům otroctví, kolonizace či nezávislosti. Přistěhovalce do Británie spojují zejména pocity odcizení, méněcennosti, krize identity, stesk po rodné zemi apod. Autoři tohoto druhu literatury se nám snaží přiblížit postavení imigranta černé pleti v poválečné Británii. Smutným faktem je, že projevům rasismu a diskriminaci se nevyhnuli ani přistěhovalci druhé generace, tj. děti imigrantů, kteří přicházejí do Británie během padesátých a šedesátých let.

Chceme-li hovořit o rozdílech v literární tvorbě první a druhé generace karibských přistěhovalců, je potřeba nejprve představit kritéria, podle kterých tyto dvě skupiny rozlišujeme. Jako první generaci obvykle označujeme ty imigranty, kteří přišli do Británie až v dospělosti na rozdíl od druhé generace, jejíž představitelé se v Británii buď narodili, nebo zde strávili poměrně větší část svého života. Obě generace autorů spojuje v jejich dílech zájem o téma migrace jako pohybu obyvatel jedné země do země jiné za určitým účelem, který byl u první generace hlavně ekonomický. Mezi oběma generacemi ale najdeme i nemálo odlišností. Zatímco první generace se marně snaží začlenit do rasistické společnosti a nakonec se smíruje s pozicí podřazené lidské rasy, druhá generace si nárokuje právo na rovné příležitosti a neváhá k tomu použít militantních prostředků. Na rozdíl od generace svých rodičů většina z nich necítí silné pouto ke Karibiku, jelikož mnozí z nich tuto oblast nikdy nenavštívili. První generace přicházející do Británie z ekonomických důvodů plánuje návrat do rodné země a snad i proto nevydává takové úsilí o začlenění se do společnosti, jako tomu je u jejich potomků. V dílech autorů první generace proto mnohdy nalezneme motivy z karibského prostředí stejně jako použití karibských dialektů; tyto prvky bychom v dílech autorů druhé generace většinou hledali marně. Tato mladá generace autorů obvykle zasazuje děj svých románů do britského prostředí, do toho jediného jim známého.

Karibská próza dlouho zastiňovala karibskou poezii, jelikož je považována za přístupnější a čtivější. Díky svým originálním formálním inovacím si však postupně i poezie vydobyla místo v britské literatuře. Témata básní psaných karibskými autory jsou obdobná jako ta, o kterých píše prozaikové. I básně se zabývají postavením karibského imigranta v metropolitních městech. Mnozí z básníků své básně využívají ke kritice britského rasismu. Básně jsou často psány v karibských dialektech, tzv. kreolštinách, které slouží jednak k odlišení od ostatních britských básníků a jednak jako zbraň proti britské společnosti, která soustavně utiskuje etnické menšiny. Vedle kreolštin používají básníci rytmu kalypsa či rytmu běžného hovoře. Snad právě proto je karibská poezie mylně považována za druh poezie, který je primárně určen k přednesu a ne k publikaci. Faktem sice je, že karibská poezie je z velké části založena na ústní tradici, ale tento přístup je značně omezující s ohledem na karibské básníky žijící a píšící v Británii.

Závěrečná část třetí kapitoly je věnována osobnosti Caryl Phillipse, autora, jehož dvě románové prvotiny jsou analyzovány v kapitole poslední. Caryl Phillips je britským dramatikem, prozaikem a esejistou karibského původu a patří mezi představitele druhé generace karibských přistěhovalců. Jeho rodiče se i s malým Phillipsem přistěhovali do Británie v padesátých letech; jejich hlavním motivem bylo poskytnout synovi kvalitní vzdělání a lepší možnosti, než jaké by měl na rodném ostrově St Kitts. Phillips byl velmi nadaný student a díky své pili vystudoval anglickou literaturu na Oxfordu. Prakticky hned po dokončení studia na univerzitě se vydal na spisovatelskou dráhu. Začal rovněž cestovat nejen po Evropě, ale i za Atlantský oceán (do Karibiku nebo do Spojených států). To mu umožnilo rozšířit si obzory a hlavně se zamyslet nad svým vlastním původem. Motiv hledání vlastní identity se objevuje v mnohých z jeho děl. I v současné době se pohybuje mezi Británií, Spojenými státy a Karibikem a přednáší na prestižních amerických a britských univerzitách. Ve své tvorbě kombinuje historická témata s tématy psychologickými a sociologickými. Je zastáncem názoru, že minulost má přímý a významný dopad na naši přítomnost. Mezi jeho oblíbená témata patří například tato: hledání identity a kořenů, migrace, dislokace, odcizení, osamění apod. Ve svých románech a esejích často čerpá nejen z vlastní zkušenosti, ale i ze zkušenosti svých rodičů a vzdálených předků.

V závěrečné kapitole této diplomové práce jsou analyzovány první dva Phillipsovy romány, *The Final Passage* a *A State of Independence*. Jsou analyzovány jak po formální, tak po obsahové stránce a zajímá nás především to, jak je zde zobrazena zkušenost karibských

imigrantů a nakolik Phillips čerpá z vlastní zkušenosti. Klíčem k Phillipsovým románům mohou být jeho eseje, ve kterých se zabývá obdobnými tématy a dále je rozvíjí. Phillipsovy romány, jeho dramata a eseje se jednoduše doplňují. Nejprve se zabýváme románem *The Final Passage* a poté následujícím *A State of Independence*, který může být považován za velmi volné pokračování románu prvního. Romány nebyly přeloženy do češtiny, a proto budeme používat jejich anglické názvy.

Pro karibské obyvatele je rozhodnutí emigrovat do Británie zcela zásadní a mnohdy nevratné. Doufají a očekávají, že v Británii naleznou lepší život, lepší pracovní příležitosti a finanční ohodnocení. Realita je však taková, že britští spoluobčané v nich vidí hrozbu: cítí, že ohrožují „čistotu“ britské rasy a zabírají jim pracovní místa. Ať jsou to Indové, Pákistánci, Číňané či přistěhovalci karibského původu, pro britskou společnost jsou všichni „barevní“ a méněcenní. Zatímco první generace imigrantů se snaží smířit se svým neblahým osudem, generace následující se všemi možnými prostředky snaží vydobýt si místo ve společnosti a její uznání. Druhá generace však čelí zásadnímu problému, a to krizi identity. Jejich kulturní, národní i etnická identita prodělává vlivem migrace významné proměny a děti imigrantů se často v období dospívání a později i v dospělosti cítí rozpolceně. Necítí se jako doma ani v Británii, ale ani na karibských ostrovech, kde mnozí z nich ve skutečnosti nikdy ani nebyli. S těmito pocity nás Phillips seznamuje prostřednictvím románových protagonistů Leily a Bertrama. Zatímco Leila zažívá projevy rasismu a odcizení v Británii, Bertram se setkává s lhostejností a neúspěchem na vlastním rodném ostrově v Karibiku.

Název Phillipsova prvního románu odkazuje k tzv. „middle passage“, čímž bylo označováno převážení afrických otroků do Karibiku přes Atlantský oceán. Leila také podstupuje cestu, ale v jejím případě jde o cestu z Karibiku do Británie. Tuto cestu lze chápat v doslovném smyslu, ale i v tom přeneseném – jako cestu za poznáním a hledáním vlastní identity. Román je rozdělen do pěti částí, které však úmyslně nejsou chronologicky řazeny a v nichž autor hojně využívá retrospektivy. Děj románu se odehrává přibližně v padesátých letech dvacátého století, nejprve na karibském ostrově (který je pravděpodobně inspirován autorovým rodným ostrovem St Kitts) a následně v Londýně. Román sleduje osudy Leily, jejího manžela Michaela a jejich malého syna Calvina v britské metropoli. Postupně se dozvídáme, proč se Leila rozhodla opustit svou rodnou zemi a vydat se na tak dalekou cestu a usadit se v cizí zemi. Jejími dvěma hlavními motivy byla jednak její nemocná matka, která odjela do Londýna, aby tam podstoupila léčbu, jednak Leilino nepovedené manželství

s nezodpovědným a věčně opilým Michaellem. Leila věřila, že v Británii začnou společně nový, lepší život. Její představy a naděje se však záhy rozplývají, když jsou nuceni obývat polorozpadlý dům, když její matka umírá a Michael ji za dramatických okolností opouští. Během pár měsíců se jí tak postupně hrouští celý život a jediné řešení spatřuje v návratu domů, kde ji čekají alespoň dva věrní a nápomocní přátelé. Navzdory svému selhání Leila cítí, že se ze svého pobytu v Londýně hodně poučila a je připravena tuto zkušenost umožnit i svým dětem, až je jednou třeba napadne vydat se hledat svého „ztraceného“ otce.

Druhý Phillipsův román je v podstatě román o návratu do rodné země. Pojednává o návratu karibského imigranta po dvaceti letech z Británie na rodný ostrov St Kitts na sklonku vyhlášení nezávislosti. Prostřednictvím protagonisty Bertrama Francise autor vyjadřuje svůj kritický postoj k této politické události, která je podle něj pouze klamem – výměnou britské nadvlády za americkou. Děj románu začíná na palubě letadla mířícího na ostrov St Kitts; Bertram přilétá pár dní před vyhlášením nezávislosti, tudíž se můžeme domnívat, že se píše rok 1983. Autor zde opět využívá retrospektivních postupů. Hlavním motivem románu je Bertramův návrat „domů“ a jeho následné (ne)začlenění zpět do společnosti. Autor zde naznačuje, jak velký dopad má čas na lidský ale i národní charakter. Bertram odjíždí do Anglie díky stipendiu a má studovat právo, nicméně studia zanedlouho nechá a musí se doslova protloukat různými podřadnými pracemi, aby si vydělal na živobytí. Mezitím neudrhuje naprosto žádný kontakt se svou rodinou ani přáteli na ostrově. Není proto divu, že se po svém návratu na St Kitts setkává s lhostejností (v tom lepším případě) a výsměchem. Bertram naivně očekává, že jej všichni přivítají s otevřenou náručí a mimo jiné zamýšlí začít podnikat, aniž by byl informován o ekonomické situaci na ostrově. Po svém návratu se dozvídá o smrti svého mladšího bratra a pochopí, že jeho matka mu to dává za vinu. Z jeho přítele Jacksona se stal zkorumpovaný politik a ve chvíli, kdy ho Bertram žádá o pomoc, mu dává jasně najevo, že se má raději vrátit tam, odkud přišel a nemá se snažit zapadnout do společnosti, do které už dávno nepatří. Bertram tak bloudí z jednoho konce ostrova na druhý a snaží se najít nějaké uplatnění či starého přítele, který by se k němu neobracel zády jako ostatní. Přepadá ho však beznaděj a uvažuje, zda se má vrátit zpět do Anglie, kde na něj nikdo a nic nečeká, nebo má zůstat a napravit vše špatné, co způsobil svým chováním matce i dalším blízkým a přátelům. Phillips opět nechává závěr otevřený, jako tomu bylo již v prvním románu.

Autor nás ve svém druhém románu seznamuje s fenoménem návratu přistěhovalců do rodné země, který byl poměrně běžným, zejména v případě první generace. Mezi dva hlavní

důvody jejich návratu patří: negativní zkušenost v hostitelské zemi a rodinné vazby v zemi jejich původu. Co se týče charakteristiky imigrantů vracejících se zpět, nejčastěji se jedná o ty, kteří strávili v Británii (nebo jiné hostitelské zemi) několik měsíců (nanejvýš pak několik let) nebo o osoby důchodového věku. Bertram Francis proto nespadá ani do jedné kategorie. Míra úspěchu či neúspěchu integrace zpět v rodné zemi závisí zejména na délce pobytu v zahraničí a na četnosti kontaktů s příbuznými a přáteli na ostrovech.

Oba romány zobrazují postavy, kterým se nepodařilo úspěšně integrovat do společnosti. Zároveň zjišťujeme, že návrat do rodné země může být více traumatizující než imigrace do hostitelské země. Protagonisté obou románů se vydávají na cestu za hledáním vlastní identity s tím rozdílem, že Leila s rodinou putuje z Karibiku do Anglie a Bertram podstupuje cestu opačným směrem. Zajímavé je také srovnání ženských a mužských postav v obou románech. Zdá se, že ženské postavy jsou zobrazeny jako zodpovědnější, rozumnější a starostlivější, zatímco mužské postavy jsou nezodpovědné, sebestředné a často se chovají dětinsky. Autor nám nabízí dvojí pohled, jednak pohled ženský (Leila) a mužský (Bertram), jednak britský a karibský, což přidává románům na zajímavosti a důležitosti.

Phillips nepopírá, že jeho romány obsahují četné autobiografické prvky. Například postavy Leily, Michaela a Calvina nám mohou připomínat Phillipsovu vlastní rodinu. Jako románové postavy, i Phillipsovi rodiče se se svým malým synem v padesátých letech přistěhovali do Británie a i oni museli čelit rasistickým projevům. I Phillipsův otec brzy opouští rodinu, z čehož pravděpodobně pramení autorovo negativní zobrazení mužských postav jako nezodpovědných a nezralých. Zajímavá je rovněž absence postavy otce v obou románech, která opět jakoby odrážela Phillipsovo vlastní dětství prožité bez otce. Ani Leila ani Bertram nikdy nepoznali svého otce. Stejně jako Bertam se i Phillips vrací po dvaceti letech do Karibiku, na rodný ostrov St Kitts, který také sloužil jako předloha pro místo děje obou románů. Rozdíl však spočívá v tom, že Phillips poprvé navštěvuje ostrov v doprovodu své matky a neplánuje se na něm usadit natrvalo. Jako Leila a Bertram, i Phillips cítí potřebu cestovat, aby tak lépe porozuměl sám sobě a své identitě. Na rozdíl od svých románových postav, které zažívají jeden neúspěch za druhým, se z Phillipse stává uznávaný spisovatel. Phillips proto cítí jistou zodpovědnost vůči svým britským druhům karibského původu a snaží se co nejvýstižněji zachytit jejich postavení v britské společnosti. Phillips je svým způsobem „mluvčím“ všech, kteří neměli stejné štěstí jako on a nestali se úspěšnými a známými. V každém případě se mu díky cestování a psaní daří lépe pochopit, že karibští imigranti

nemají pouze jeden domov, ale patří do pomyslného prostoru mezi Británií, Karibikem a Afrikou. Tato několikerá identita mu však umožňuje střídat perspektivy a tím oslovit širší čtenářské publikum.

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ANOTACE

Diplomová práce se zabývá zkušeností karibských přistěhovalců do Británie a jejím zobrazením v prvních dvou románech *The Final Passage* a *A State of Independence* britského autora karibského původu: Caryl Phillipse. Nejprve stručně nastiňuje historii imigrace do Británie z bývalých britských kolonií v Karibiku. Následně se věnuje vývoji anglicky psané karibské literatury a autorům do ní patřícím. Představuje život a dílo Caryl Phillipse jakožto významného představitele karibské literatury. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována již zmíněným Phillipsovým dvěma románovým prvotinám, ve kterých se autor zabývá problémy migrace, rasismu, dislokace, odcizení a hledání identity. Zatímco ústředním motivem románu *The Final Passage* je migrace z Karibiku do Británie, v románu *A State of Independence* je to návrat z Británie na rodný ostrov v Karibiku. Obě díla také zobrazují neúspěšné vztahy na osobní i národní úrovni.

SUMMARY

The thesis is concerned with the experience of Caribbean immigrants to Britain and its portrayal in the first two novels – *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence* by a British author of Caribbean origin: Caryl Phillips. It briefly describes the history of immigration to Britain from the former British colonies in the Caribbean. It also deals with the evolution of Anglophone Caribbean literature as well as with authors belonging to it. It particularly focuses on the Phillips's first two novels mentioned above in which the author addresses such issues as migration, racism, dislocation, alienation and search for identity. While his first novel *The Final Passage* deals with migration from the Caribbean to Britain, his second novel *A State of Independence* focuses on return migration from Britain to the island of origin in the Caribbean. Both works portray failed relationships both on a personal and a national level.