For the “Dark Star”: Reading Womanism and Black Womanhood in the Novels of Caryl Phillips

When he come home, I don’t need him to say he love me

I don’t need him to bring me gifts, I just wants him

to hold me close, make like he glad to see me

bend down t’my ear an whisper my name.

–Frank X Walker “Say My Name”

There is a moment in Caryl Phillips’s novel *Dancing in the Dark* (2005) where the narrator pushes us awkwardly from George Walker’s frenzied coitus with his white lover Eva to a brief, cold moment in bed with his wife Ada. The contrast arrests the reader, but even more striking than this juxtaposition of George’s uncontrolled desire and utter repulsion, is the simultaneous disdain and admiration he has for his wife. The short paragraph acknowledges her hurt alongside his missteps, and it presents her repeatedly within the realm of her grace and talent as “Dark star” (117). Yet the brief passage is overrun with George’s regrets. The narrator tell us that “lying next to her he is filled with remorse” and “his stiff body stiffens further at her accidental touch” (117). Other Black women in Phillips’s work experience moments like this. Like Ada, both Lottie in *Dancing in the Dark* and Leila in *The Final Passage* (1985) find themselves married and untouchable. Even Malka in *The Nature of Blood* (1997) has a similar encounter, albeit not with a husband.

The corpus of Caryl Phillips’s fiction offers varied representations of Black women, but within their diverse experiences these women’s intimate connections are governed by a tenuousness wrought primarily by their men. Phillips’s work has already garnered much attention for its ability to authentically represent women’s voices. His novels *Cambridge* (1991) and *The Nature of Blood*, in particular, have been highly praised for their credible female narrators,[[1]](#endnote-1) and Phillips himself has discussed the ease with which he engages female characters.[[2]](#endnote-2) As such, the dearth of scholarship on Phillips’s Black women is particularly striking considering that figures such as Leila in *The Final Passage* and Patsy in *A State of Independence* command critical attention, if not in terms of their lives in the world of the texts, at least in the ways that they take up space and mark the formal structure of the novels. This essay aims to advance the study of Phillips’s unique and varied portrayal of women by analyzing his depiction of Black women in *Dancing in the Dark*, *The Nature of Blood*, and *The Final Passage*. Even as the novels engage early archetypes of black women, they simultaneously upturn those conventions for a more nuanced portraiture of black womanhood. A testament to the highly complex literature that marks Phillips’s oeuvre, Black woman figures such as Lottie and Ada in *Dancing in the Dark*, Malka in *The Nature of Blood*, and Leila and Millie in *The Final Passage* emerge as important and defining characters, who, although constrained on the page, in the story, or within a largely male-driven narrative, are presented not as cursory figures but as primary characters whose lives anchor the broader themes of the texts.

The novels I examine here show black women whose voices and experiences initially seem to be occluded by or appear to be secondary to the men’s stories, or in the case of *The Final Passage* where the women’s voices are balanced, their experiences are shaped negatively by men in the world of the text. The women’s existences, however, are incursions that critique, among other things, even the most endearing male protagonists. What unfolds, then, is a distinctly Phillipsian mode of portraying the black woman. This mode is neither directly Black feminist nor Womanist,[[3]](#endnote-3) nor is it, as Trudier Harris has said of some black male writers writing women, “as complicitous as the white-created mythology surrounding black women” (2). Instead, it approaches a representation of black womanhood in a white supremacist world, all the while recognizing male privilege in the world of the text and even in structure on the page. Phillips’s fiction thus meanders along a continuum of portraiture resting between what Gary L. Lemons has described as “Pro-woman(ist)” gender-progressive black writing “in solidarity with black women against black antifeminist ideology” (xiii) and Trudier Harris’s notion of complicity. This essay will explore the ways Phillips’s Black women navigate the physical and emotional spaces of intimacy in an effort to show the novels’ complex treatment of Black women, a treatment which includes both a sensitivity toward, as well as a disdain for, the women. Beginning with the novel that was the impetus and foundation for this study, the essay will consider the texts in a reverse chronological order by first examining *Dancing in the Dark,* which most explicitly illustrates the intimate lives of black women, and it will close by looking at Phillips’s earliest work which has attracted the least critical attention, particularly around issues related to black womanhood. As I observe that Phillips’s female characters simultaneously succumb to and resist domination, the essay will appraise whether or not these actions occur in any particular pattern or frequency and within specific relationships. My point of departure will be to first consider the women’s relationships to the men in their lives, their platonic and sisterly relationships with other women, and their interactions with maternal figures and the state of motherhood. This essay is not intended to be a comparative study of Phillips’s treatment of white and Black women, nor does it make any claims about what Phillips intended with his much-praised representations of women, although this area is certainly fertile ground for academic study. Instead, I will analyze the texts’ rich drawings of black womanhood with a mind to the ways that white supremacist ideology[[4]](#endnote-4) shapes and affects the lives of the characters. Cornel West argues that:

White supremacist ideology is based first and foremost on the degradation of black bodies in order to control them. One of the best ways to instill fear in people is to terrorize them. Yet this fear is best sustained by convincing them that their bodies are ugly, their intellect is inherently underdeveloped, their culture is less civilized, and their future warrants less concern than that of other peoples. (85).

For Phillips’s black women, intimacy, or lack thereof, is linked specifically to his male protagonists’ internalized white supremacy which projects stereotypical images of black women, particularly that of the hyper-sexualized, and conversely, the unseen/un-seeable or undesirable black woman.

**Black Women Undone by the ‘Whiteness of Winter’**

Gwen Bergner’s essay, “The Role of Gender in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks,*” attempts to “broaden Fanon’s outline of black women’s subjectivity and to work toward delineating the interdependence of race and gender” (77). Although Bergner neglects Black Feminist[[5]](#endnote-5) critique, choosing instead to employ feminist psychoanalytic theory to “review Fanon’s construction of gender while illuminating the contributions of his psychoanalytic framework of racial identity,” her work is useful to understand aspects of Phillips’s depiction of black women in *Dancing in the Dark* (77). Bergner questions Fanon’s proximity to, and purported understanding of, black women, and she problematizes his “decontextualized analysis of black femininity,” which she argues, “re-creates the structure of the colonialist discourse Fanon successfully deconstructs in much of *Black Skin*, *White Masks*” (83). Phillips has noted Fanon’s influence,[[6]](#endnote-6) but his work departs from the un-nuanced Fanonian lens for a more complex treatment of black women. Whereas Fanon says of the black woman: “We know nothing about her,” Phillips, via his fiction, demonstrates the ways that a black woman can be seen (*BSWM* 157). *Dancing in the Dark* projects black women and black womanhood bound by a racialized and patriarchal sexism perpetuated by black men, and others in the community who have internalized oppression. The thread of what seems like ambivalence toward black women in the world of the text is contrasted by an often precariously sexed and simultaneously nearly-invisible black woman. This disunity is not a vacancy on the part of the black woman, but rather a result of the black man’s racial trauma[[7]](#endnote-7) which makes him incapable of connecting with her. *Dancing in the Dark* presents pathologized black women who are not offered the same absolution as that given to the black men in the world of the text. By portraying these men as decidedly patriarchal, the novel itself functions in a Pro-woman(ist) way. In particular, the consciousness of the women in this crisis of intimacy further amplifies the text in this direction. Repeatedly we see the women ponder their condition, which resembles what Alice Walker noted in the writing of Jean Toomer who saw women “lay vacant and fallow as autumn fields, with harvest time never in sight: and he saw them enter loveless marriages, without joy; and become prostitutes, without resistance; and become mothers of children, without fulfillment” (233).

That she is relegated to a life of discontent comes as no surprise to the main woman figure in Phillips’s *Dancing in the Dark*. We are told that Bert’s wife, Lottie Williams, “knows that a colored woman cannot expect too much out of this life” (53). However, Lottie is initially satisfied with Bert, and she views him as “a capital second husband…a man solid like a tree but with the sensitivity of a boy” (52-53). Early on the couple shares some intimacies and Bert attempts to reveal himself and how he came to play the controversial blackface role. The narrator tells us that Lottie “understands that he is asking to be forgiven…that her suitor is a man who is playing a part…he is playing a character…a performer who applies makeup in order to play a part” (35). Shortly after, we have a conversation between Lottie and her friend Ada in which her friend chides Lottie for wanting to marry a “white man’s fool” (37). Lottie’s reaction to this conversation is poignant: “Lottie looks herself up and down in the dressing room mirror, and then she picks up the powder brush. These days she finds it necessary to apply extra makeup, which both depresses and alarms her” (37). Here, it is clear that Lottie’s need to compensate and augment her physical beauty is directly linked to the fact of Bert’s blacking-up and the subsequent trauma caused by his performances. Just as Bert dons the burnt cork to play a part, Lottie adds extra make-up to play the part of wife of a blackface performer. Initially, it appears as a way for Lottie to align herself with her fiancé. However, the novel emphasizes Bert’s disconnection from Lottie as a result of his finding her sexually undesirable, unfeminine, and unattractive. The narrator, while attributing Bert’s melancholy to his role on the stage, presents Bert’s inability to be intimate as a consequence of his view of Lottie. His view of her, however, has little to do with any type of lack where Lottie is concerned and is more a result of Bert’s self-concept. His reclusive nature is repeatedly juxtaposed with images of a physically flawed Lottie. In her groundbreaking study *Black Women in the Fiction of James Baldwin*, Trudier Harris explores, among other things, the way black women become scapegoats for the black male ego, where, in the case of *Go Tell it On the Mountain*, “black women are conceived against the backdrop of the fundamentalist church in the black community” (12). In similar fashion, Lottie becomes victim to Bert’s projection from the stage, and the backdrop of his polluted perception of self serves to distance his wife.Bert is consumed by the caricature of himself, and his viewing Lottie through this grotesque lens leaves her unable to provide Bert with whatever he needs to ease his psychological burden; the young couple exists and remains in a phlegmatic state of wedlock:

At night, in their bed, he recoils from her touch, and his eyes brim with tears at the slightest woe. Now that they are married he calls her Mother, but she does not have the heart to ask him to discover an alternative word for she instinctively understands that he has no other. She would prefer Lottie, or wife, or darling, for Mother instantly reduces her to something less than a woman, but she imagines that in some part of his unconscious this is probably how her husband now regards her. As being something less than a woman, a companion perhaps, or a new extension to the family, but certainly not the trusted bedrock upon which he will build the rest of his life. (42)

Lottie, like the enslaved wife in Frank X Walker’s poem which serves as epigraph to this essay, longs to hear her name and have her humanity properly situated. The moments that depict Bert and Lottie’s lack of intimacy are almost always followed by a negative regard for Lottie’s physical appearance and demeanor. The narrative is a decidedly gendered and racialized one, revealing the man’s internalized white racist ideas about beauty and womanhood which plague Lottie and other black women. Under the yoke of the white gaze[[8]](#endnote-8) and loaded with the stereotypical markers of black women’s representation, we see these women sexually longing even as they are deemed sexually undesirable in the world of the text. The characters are ailing in the shadow of whiteness. While Bert chooses to perform the white racist caricature of blackness, Lottie’s subjugation to such projections is beyond her control. The narrator tells us that Lottie endured her grandmother’s weekly and torturous efforts to straighten the young girl’s hair. Lottie’s experience is juxtaposed to her sister’s flowing hair and light eyes, and it is evident that Lottie, like Bert, wears a kind of mask that is also shaped by whiteness. In addition, “Lottie does not know whether to talk to him about her hair. The fact is she does not talk to anybody about her hair. She simply hopes that nobody will notice. It is her own private misery, and she is seldom without a hat” (43). Lottie’s suffering under the valuation of a white racist standard, one that arguably oppresses Bert and George (albeit in gendered ways) as well, widens the distance between the characters. Furthermore, the degrees of distance in their intimacy arguably shifts when there is resistance to white supremacist patriarchy.

The subtleties of this portrayal problematize black male privilege and illustrate the need for a new trajectory in counter-hegemonic discourse where black women are regarded—a calling out to the Pro-woman(ism) of which Lemons speaks. Black women, as Deborah King has noted, experience a “Multiple Jeopardy” in which their lives and opportunities for liberation are limited by the intersection of race, gender, and class.[[9]](#endnote-9) *Dancing in the Dark* portrays a nuanced multiple jeopardy in the case of Lottie. Even though she is not limited in terms of class—she and Bert have access to significant capital—her life continues to be shaped by a raced and gendered notion of blackness, and racist ideas about the insufficiency of black womanhood directly affect her ideas about self and her interactions with Bert. Both Lottie and her husband are governed by white supremacy: Bert is relegated to nightly performing of a white racist caricature of blackness that emasculates him, and Lottie is subject to pining for a man whose trauma has left him impotent.

The text’s imagining of Lottie’s psychosis being rooted in the “problem” of her hair as opposed to the inability of her husband to satisfy her sexual and emotional needs does not relieve Bert of the burden and responsibility, but it suggests a certain degree of “untouchability” in Lottie. Again, we see the gaping distance in intimacy as a fissure dug by white supremacist notions of beauty and desirability. The presence of white ideals of beauty are impressed upon Lottie well before meeting Bert, and the narrative further emphasizes the struggles she faces. Here, the text’s acknowledgement of the complexities of Black womanhood mark Phillips’s novel as Pro-woman(ist). The dilemma of Lottie’s hair is set against the story of her sister Florence who is described as having an appearance that fits well into a white standard. Flo’s story, another portraiture of black womanhood that is anchored to an archetype, is juxtaposed with Lottie’s, and begins with the narrative of her hair. The narrator further emphasizes that “Florence’s hair took nice and easy” to straightening and “flowed out to her shoulders” (45). Lottie is positioned against the white symbols of beauty emblazoned on Florence’s body, and *Dancing in the Dark* engages the familiar and pervasive depictions of black womanhood shaped by white racist discourse. The mulatta archetype[[10]](#endnote-10) is embodied by the character Florence, who is the object of many men’s desire and who ultimately partners with a man and has several children. As is the case with the mulatta, Flo becomes a central sexual object and her life ends tragically. Once again, Phillips challenges this formulation of black womanhood in *Dancing in the Dark*. This portrayal, however, serves to reveal the text’s acknowledgement of Black women’s struggles. Lottie is simultaneously mother to her husband and negligent aunt as she nurtures Bert and yet neglects to mind her nieces during her previous marriage. This presentation of an un-sexed, mammy-like[[11]](#endnote-11) Lottie persists, and we even see her internalize these positions: “She had long ago convinced herself that to be touched was not that important, and she had imagined, as was the case with Mr. Thompson, that once they were married he would choose not to press any serious claim upon her body. And being a gentleman, Mr. Williams has chosen not to do so” (83).

Phillips captures the inter-social crisis that almost devastated black love and rendered many black women untouchable in the early 20th century United States. The narrative explains that Bert “sleeps now in a different room than Mother, but she never mentions this fact. These days, neither the thought nor the touch of his wife produces any stirring of ardor in his loins and so he eventually deemed it best to make a dignified, if somewhat clumsy, exit from their bedroom” (108). Lottie’s pining and desire for Bert becomes more pronounced as the novel progresses, and her ritual of masturbating daily in the bathroom is described in almost mechanical terms: “Lottie lives for the cherished moment in her sprawling day when she is able to secrete herself in the privacy of the bathroom” (115). Later we see her deep longing for physical intimacy:

Lottie hopes that one night she might feel a cool tongue against her body, pulling lazy trails of saliva that will be massaged into her skin with the mouth and tongue working as one joyful unit, working slowly, slowly, fly-flicking tongue bruising her in the hollow of her neck don’t stop don’t yes breathe on me face down on me deeper and down hoping that she might wake up damp and exhausted and on the very edge of civilization bearing the gift of another person’s body. (115)

Repeatedly, we see the women presented in sexual terms—both as hypersexual and longing—or as sexually undesirable. George and Bert, existing both on and off the stage under the glare of the white power structure, reject their wives and ultimately black womanhood. While Bert struggles with the inability to connect with Lottie from the beginning of their marriage, George’s passion for Ada shifts from hot desire to a cool rejection of Ada. His explicit rejection of her comes immediately after a frenzied sexual encounter with the white woman Eva. Ada, like Lottie, is depicted with a certain degree of untouchability: “Her small breasts are now no more than two stubborn buds that appear to be no longer either sensitive or inviting” (117). Unlike his coitus with Eva, George’s body resists any closeness with Ada, and her suffering under the constraint of white supremacy, is further emphasized. She, too, has pined for her husband George, who is taken by a white woman. While Ada demonstrates a resistance to the racist ideas that seem to plague Lottie, she becomes undone in opposition to white womanhood. Ada’s performance in the play *In Dahomey*, reflects her struggle. Her rendition of “I’d Like to be a Real Lady” is an unfortunate irony that positions her (and Black women) outside of “ladyhood” despite her confidence and assertiveness throughout the text. Ada does not care about George’s affairs, except in this case, “Ada believes that her full-lipped, ebony-hued husband has no place with a flame-haired, hip-swinging white maiden” (103). Her objection ultimately solidifies the irreconcilable distance between herself and George, and she remains marginalized and disempowered in her relationship and on stage.

When Ada Overton becomes Aida Walker, Lottie wonders at her attempts to become someone new, and the novel presents the women struggling with their multiple consciousness[[12]](#endnote-12)of race, class, and sex. Aida, however, is incapable of moving forward, and faced with the insurmountable whiteness, she attempts suicide. The narrator says that she was held “spellbound by the winter storm” before she took morphine (129). Aida succumbs to the consequences of a white racist ideology that effected daily violence upon her psyche and she tries to kill herself facing the *whiteness* of a winter storm. Even in crisis Aida is affected by a kind of whiteness projected by her husband. George sees her “draped in white with her eyes shut tightly against the electric light” and he thinks “she looks like an angel” (131). In this instance George sees his wife anew, and how she is presented—draped in whiteness—has more of an effect on him than the fact of her nearly dying.

After Aida’s suicide attempt, George falls ill and the dynamic between the couple shifts. *Dancing in the Dark* continues its manipulation and troubling of archetypes of black womanhood, eventually cementing Lottie and Aida as mammy figures, in essence if not in body.[[13]](#endnote-13) Again, the text moves in and out of convention, and in a Pro-woman(ist) mode, portrays the crisis of the Black woman, in this case, her eventual relegation to the role of caretaker. As I note above, Bert begins to refer to his wife as “Mother” soon after they are married, and she indeed becomes his caregiver. Aida eventually shares a similar fate when George becomes ill. Both men suffer because of a commitment to the white supremacist model: Bert suffers at the hand of white representations of blackness—doled out by him, and George as a result of his adoration for the white woman Eva, whose sexuality ultimately destroys his body and mind with syphilis. George’s tenderness and affection for Aida comes only after he is overrun with a disease that affects his thought and renders him incapable of physical intimacy, and, more importantly, when his wife becomes his nurse. The text tells us that Aida “sings [to George] as though serenading a child” (149). Later we see her feeding him and helping him to drink water, at which point “he manages to smile at his wife, which appears to lighten her heart” (151). The relationship shifts, creating wider distance which relegates the women to serving their husbands.

The depiction reveals the ways in which Black women’s bodies are renewed commodity, then and even now. At once, black women are bombarded by images of a white ideal of beauty that directly contrast with their own concept of self, and they also face a reality in which they (and their characteristics) are automatically placed in opposition to whiteness and deemed undesirable and ultimately fit only for service. Phillips’s novel explores the experiences of the African diaspora, but its attention to Black women, in a decidedly Pro-woman(ist) mode, offers narratives which expose the instability of black love as it elevates black womanhood.

**Impassive Masks and Un-seeable Blackness**

Phillips’s critically acclaimed novel *The Nature of Blood* also brings to light the plight of black womanhood and black women in a Pro-woman(ist) approach. While the novel has received much critical attention for its treatment of the Holocaust as well as for its exploration of diaspora, little or no attention has been given to an almost invisible and dislocated figure in the text. The brief story of Malka, the Ethiopian Jew, offers a caustic indictment of white supremacy by depicting ways the white gaze renders her un-seeable. Woven into the narrative of a major character like Stephan, a doctor working in Cyprus and then in Palestine during the British Mandate, we meet Moshe, a young refugee in Stephan’s company, and a black general of the Venetian army who has married a Venetian woman; he is a figure we can assume to be Othello. The stories of these individuals are tied to Eva, a victim of the Shoah. Eva’s narrative occupies the majority of the text and we are drawn into her life at a concentration camp, while Malka, an Ethiopian Jew who has been resettled to Israel in the late twentieth century, initially seems to be a minor figure. In fact, centered on Eva, the narrative presents Malka’s story as an aside. Other black figures, such as the Venetian general, appear briefly and their roles help to illuminate the lives of Jews from fourteenth-century Italy onwards. One critic has suggested that the stories of Phillips’s black characters in *The Nature of Blood* are not central, but rather pave the way for a better understanding of loss. In so doing, Kathie Birat has argued that

On the one hand, this deliberate displacement of the African experience into the framework of another diaspora could be read as a reluctance to make use of the critical paradigms which writers of the African diaspora have so painstakingly elaborated over the course of the twentieth century. On the other, it could be seen as the desire to avoid the pitfalls of reference to specific worlds while expressing the tension between the opposing visions that underline all worlds viewed in this light, Phillips may be moving away from specific reference to the African diaspora as a way of capturing all the more clearly the experience of loss which is the essence of all forms of uprooting. (198)

I contend, however, that race (and particularly the African Diaspora) is, in fact, at the heart of this novel which so thoughtfully captures the Shoah. While Malka’s story accounts for less than ten pages of the novel, it arguably anchors Phillips’s central point. That is, according to Phillips in his essay titled “On *The Nature of Blood* and the Ghost of Anne Frank,” “…Europe’s obsession with homogeneity, and her inability to deal with the heterogeneity that is—in fact—her natural condition” (6). Thus, a novel set primarily in Europe includes the marginal story of an Ethiopian Jew in Israel to portray something about Europe, but, more importantly, to speak about the black woman’s condition in a decidedly European (albeit not continental) space. The story reveals that Europe’s legacy has evolved, and it has done so, not only on the continent, but also across the globe. And it continues in Malka’s story in former British Mandated Palestine, a colonial space, now Israel, still reeling from European notions of white superiority which continue to plague black women.

*The Nature of Blood* concludes with the story of Malka, and we learn of her family’s struggle to fit in and build a successful life in their new homeland amidst racial prejudice. While Phillips has garnered much praise for this work, there have been a number of critics who suggest that he is misappropriating the Holocaust.[[14]](#endnote-14) Still, scholars such as Wendy Zierler have stated that Phillips has “created fictional works that bring together stories of African slavery and the Holocaust in meaningful and ethically compelling ways” (12). *The Nature of Blood* is indeed a compelling work, and in fact, it goes beyond the mere bringing together of stories. Phillips calls into question the Fascist roots of the atrocities performed at the hand of European white supremacist power for centuries, and the novel situates imperial projects such as colonialism and the Atlantic Slave trade as the offspring of an ideology which also led to the Holocaust and continued subjugation in the late twentieth century. Phillips meticulously scripts very different lives and wide, varied experiences which are borne out of the seed of European notions of white supremacy. Furthermore, the narrative moves to illustrate that those very crimes reverberate, leaving communities of still-unacknowledged victims. The Phillipsian exploration of Diaspora, where black Diaspora is also Diaspora in the Jewish sense, is exemplified in Malka’s identity, and the text evinces the reality, reach, and permanence of white supremacy.

Malka is one such victim, even as she is also depicted with some degree of agency. Those flashes of her resistance are the Pro-woman(ist) moments in the text, which, according to Alice Walker, demonstrates a commitment “to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female” (xi). Her brief presence at the end of the novel successfully illustrates the reach of white racist ideology, whereby the voice of the Jew remains a subdued one despite the creation of a homeland or a space for that voice. Phillips’s text depicts Malka’s subjugation in content as well as in form. As noted, she occupies no more than ten pages of the novel. Thus, Malka’s identity and voice are presented and understood only through the filter of Stephan’s.

Malka’s substatus is indeed a result of her compounded difference—her “Multiple Jeopardy” in the words of Deborah K. King. As a Jew residing in Israel, her difference, and the reason for her subjugated status, lies within the layers of race and gender. Presenting Malka as such, the novel calls to mind Gayatri Spivak’s argument in “Outside the Teaching Machine” where she says “the political goals of the new nation are supposedly determined by a regulative logic derived from the old colony” (77-78). In this case, the old colony is presumed to be the World War II era leadership which led to the divisions and concentration camps maintained by Nazi Germany. Thus, the legacy and root of anti-semitic ideas and practices endured by Jews for centuries are now transformed into the very tools which exclude the Ethiopian Jews. Europe, as Spivak’s “old colony,” has exported its retooled ideology from the continent along with the white supremacist ideas that infect the rest of the world. More specifically, as internalized racist ideology permeates the Israeli communities, we see, according to Bénédicte Ledent, “[former victims of racism turning into racists]” (140). Within that function, Malka’s new home, among those who are supposedly her cultural brothers and sisters, becomes a state of exclusion and a site of severe subjugation. Ledent states that “blood, though life-saving, embodies a form of racism” (140). She further asserts that *The Nature of Blood* illustrates Phillips’s “point about the inherently racist nature of Europe” (138). She goes on to suggest that, in the novel,

…blood [acts] as multifaceted metaphor, as something that both unites and separates people. On the one hand, it is the substance of life that links all human beings together, whatever their race, and hence symbolizes the common fund of humanity so forcefully denied by all racist ideologies…on the other hand [it] symbolizes the barrier between the different human groups, whether families or races, thus standing for their irremediable estrangement and the violence this eventually engenders (139).

While Malka does not experience physical violence, the alienation she feels is evident. That her new home, Israel, alienates its own ‘blood’ because of skin color is emphasized in *The Nature of Blood*. This in-community (religious) discrimination could be seen as analogous to the in-community (black) antifeminism of which Gary L. Lemons speaks. In “On *The Nature of Blood* and the Ghost of Anne Frank” Phillips discusses the 1996 report of the actual rejection of Black Jewish blood by Israeli authorities as “the story that would enable [him] to put the final piece of the narrative puzzle into place and finish [his] novel” (4). This actual performance of purging blood from black donors calls to mind the experience of others in the black diaspora. In the United States, the Jim Crow era one-drop rule fed white supremacist efforts. While the Bete Israel, as the Ethiopian Jews refer to their community, did not endure slavery in the Americas, the racist ideology that upheld the enslavement and postbellum oppression of African descendants arguably led to their unequal treatment in Israel. The legacy of Eurocentrism and rampant white supremacy which, as Césaire noted, was violently enacted upon Africans and the diaspora, likely made its way to the biblical lands with the European and American efforts to form a Zionist nation. Phillips approaches the compounded subjugation of the Black/woman/Jew,[[15]](#endnote-15) and effectively calls his readers to reconsider the interrelation of historical trauma brought about by white racist ideology. Edward Said discusses this concept in his essay “Ideology of Difference,” where he suggests that the very ideas which led to anti-Semitism in Europe also led to Orientalism and global racism.[[16]](#endnote-16) While Phillips’s text does not parallel the Shoah and the Atlantic Slave Trade, it suggests that European racism is so infective that it even cuts through bloodlines, even as it moves to define bloodlines. Thus, even as Israel mounts a multinational effort to relocate the Jews of Ethiopia, rescuing them from persecution under the stigma of the pejorative term Falasha, the nation’s efforts to gather the tribes ultimately leads to a clear demarcation of who can be accepted. It is important to note, as Michael Rothberg and others do, that “the novel’s primary focus is not the simple binary between perpetrators and victims of racist violence” (164). Phillips’s fiction offers more complex and highly nuanced relationships that reveal a racial dynamic that is neither accidental nor mere historical coincidence. This complication represents what Lemons describes as “a contemporary, black male space for writing/speaking our own narratives of *self*-recovery, a recovery grounded in black feminist thought,” and Caryl Phillips’s novels and his characters approach but do not always accomplish this restorative task (xv).

To begin this task of recovery, Phillips, through the avuncular character Stephan, connects Malka’s and Moshe’s experiences. The text redirects us and creates a sense of balance in the novel by opening with Moshe’s story and closing with Malka’s, and the author presents two young people as figures linked by the dominant male figure Stephan. He, like other adult male characters, is free to make choices for himself such as abandoning family, wife and children, while the experiences of the boy Moshe and the young Malka are colored by hardships and lack of options. Both Moshe and Malka are refugees whose fates are decided by the ruling government. Their displacement is colored by uncertainty; however, their interactions with Stephan reveal that the possibilities for each are vastly different.

The experience of the black woman is bleak as opposed to that of the young, Romanian, Jewish man. Stephan says, “Moshe slips out his hands from between mine. Fruit growing freely on trees. Yes. Take it straight from the branch. Yes…Now there will be a country. We can share” (11). Phillips sketches the similarities between early twentieth-century experience of European Jews and that of the Ethiopian Jews arriving in a now-established Israel decades later. The references to language training and cultural education also appear in the brief narrative of Malka. We are told that “after her arrival, [Malka] had undergone two years of intensive language study” (200). Malka’s brief sections reveal aspects of her family’s migration, and we learn of her family’s journey to Zion and their hopes for the Promised Land:

No more wandering. No longer landless. No more tilling of soil that did not belong to us. What is your name? Malka. Malka, do not be shy. You are going home. And when we arrived, and stepped down off the plane, we all kissed the ground. We thanked God for returning us to Zion. (201).

We see those aspirations juxtaposed with their confinement in the camp-like absorption centre and the subsequent experience in the community:

In our country, we were not used to relying on outsiders. And then, as we learnt the language and your ways, our parents felt as though they were losing us. It was hard for them. They were no longer responsible for their children. Have you seen the ugly housing at the edges of the city where we live? My brother is in the army now. But my parents, they are sick. After the absorption centre, they are frightened of white walls and white coats. (208)

While her story is reminiscent of Moshe’s refugee experience, Phillips clearly exposes Malka’s marginal position. Although there are three instances when we hear her voice—it is ultimately framed by Stephan and her narrative is only witnessed because of its interaction with him. Thus, the text itself models the hegemonic structure, as the space Malka occupies in the novel is extremely small. This depiction of Malka does not defend her subordinance, but aims, instead, to make a space for that status to be abraded. Malka’s utterances find their way into Stephan’s narrative and through that dominant narrative the text exposes the condition which would render Malka silent. Her situation, thus, presents her as a gendered and raced, unheard, but holding a rightful claim to the nation—the community which subjugates her and creates the inequities she experiences. Phillips illustrates how Malka’s life, unlike Moshe’s, is shaped by this legacy as she endures oppression in what is supposed to be the Promised Land. Unable to get a job as a nurse, Malka is forced to work in a bar, and this encounter and the terms of their interaction seals Stephan’s view of her. She is sexualized in his presence even as he fails to listen to and hear her. He objectifies her as he observes her beauty, and he sees her face as “an impassive mask” while he is unable to detect the “exaggerated joy” he finds in the faces of the other women present (198). Later, he says “her eyes were the deepest black, which made the white about them appear ivory,” and he tells us of “the warm strange smell of her person” (201). This objectification of Malka is rooted in a white racist ideology which views people of African descent as primitive, exotic others. Indeed, the “impassive mask” of which he speaks prevents him from ever really getting to know Malka. Her visible difference keeps him from ever reaching beyond the surface, thereby leaving only his superficial objectification. This othering of Malka renders her un-seeable and it distances her even in this space of intimacy where Stephan finds himself incapable of speaking with and hearing her. Like the gendered subalterns at the heart of Spivak’s argument, Malka attempts to convey a sense of her emotions, but finds her receiver incapable of or unwilling to fully grasp her utterances. Her blackness—her difference—and Stephan’s consciousness of her race prevents him from doing so. With her race before him, Stephan does not reduce the distance in their space even though the potential is there. Furthermore, the text utilizes the Jezebel[[17]](#endnote-17) archetype but also destabilizes it in a Pro-woman(ist) mode.

Even as Malka is subjugated by Stephan’s lens, the man is not completely unaware of his infraction. Stephan’s unusual, even animalistic descriptions of Malka provoke a great deal of discomfort in him, and force him to gaze back onto himself. He even admits that “none of the other women had ever made him feel that way” and “it was precisely the awful reality of these frailties that the [other] young women seemed temporarily to erase from his mind” (201). This moment marks another example in the fiction of Caryl Phillips where the portrayal of black womanhood is accompanied by a critique of the dominant power structure, something Gary L. Lemons argues is necessary in gender-progressive writing by black men.

When they are in the hotel alone, after another date at the club, we are told that “the moonlight streamed into the room” illuminating their space much like the fire between Moshe and Stephan (209). Yet, Stephan darkens the room further, and in a brief but loaded exchange we see the relationship further illustrate the cultural distance between the two. In the darkness, Malka asks “Do you not wish to see me?” (209). Stephan does not answer her question, but instead makes an unrelated statement about his own needs in the relationship thereby reifying her subordinate status. This brief exchange depicts Malka not being seen by the representative of (and arguably one of the fathers of) contemporary Israel, and Stephan not fully recognizing her need to be seen. His response to her question was to simply ask to be her friend, and when Malka tells him “but you *are* my friend,” the gap between them is widened further (209). Each one’s understanding of the nature of the relationship is different. They are portrayed as even more disconnected when we are told that Malka “slid into the bed, taking care not to touch him” (209). In direct contrast to the intimate hand-holding and quiet talking that occurs between Moshe and Stephan, this interaction with Malka is markedly more telling. Ledent suggests that “Malka represents ultimate Otherness…as she is easily dismissed by Israeli society” (143). Stephan himself confirms this othering, as the next morning he ponders his night, wonders if Malka has stolen his wallet, and tells himself that she and her people “belonged to another land…another place” ( 210). Ultimately, the relationship succumbs to the distant intimacy created by the white gaze on black womanhood. The text itself is Pro-woman(ist), even if the character fails to move beyond his own white supremacist patriarchy. Malka confirms the text’s Pro-woman(ism) as she claims her legacy and indicts the exclusionary actions, saying “This Holy Land did not deceive us. The people did” (207). This indictment of white patriarchal racist ideology reflects Phillips’ earlier assertions that:

…the danger of rampant tribalism, whether it emerges as a result of asserting nationalism, in the east, or of combating federalism, in the west, is that in order to affirm who you are as people you must also create a class of people who you are not. Who are different. Who are outsiders. Who can never be you. Who are less than you (*The European Tribe* xii).

While *The Nature of Blood* depicts this intolerance (often to those identified as others, but certainly, as in the case of Malka to people who belong to the group), it is the emphasis that such hate is refashioned by its former victims that reveals the reach of racism. According to Moore-Gilbert, through this depiction, “Phillips addresses Israel extensively and is certainly critical of the nation at moments. His doubts are primarily related to what he represents as its racism, which is seen as part of Israel’s European legacy, towards Black Jews” (114). Moreover, Malka’s experience in the world of the text further marks the legacy of racism as gendered and ultimately inescapable.

Phillips, without appropriating the Shoah to express the anguish of Black people under European domination, effectively illustrates how white racist ideology can permeate even a seemingly inclusive space. Much like black women in *Dancing in the Dark,* the fate of the black woman in Israel is tenuous. She becomes the distant intimate where internalized white supremacist views decimate black love and black survival. Phillips’s attention to racism permeates the text and is reinforced by the nuanced connections of the characters and stories. Phillips’s work, in a markedly Pro-woman(ist) fashion, advances a distinctive portrayal of black women that reveals the complexities of their experiences in a world where the ideologies of white supremacy proliferate.

**Sisterhood and Solitude from Sandy Bay to London**

The literature of this Black Diasporan writer has always pulled on Womanist threads, however. His earliest work of fiction, *The Final Passage*, published a decade before *The Nature of Blood* and two decades before *Dancing in the Dark* seems more firmly grounded in the Pro-woman(ist) formulation. It is, arguably, the most gender-progressive of the three novels, even as it portrays a world in which black women are subjugated on many levels and represents the most movement across that previously referenced continuum of solidarity with black women and complicity with an extant white imaginary. The women are at once bold and submissive, desirable and repugnant, and their voices and actions are, quite often, reactions to the men in their sphere. Yet even though the lives of the women in *The Final Passage* are acted upon and shaped by men, their stories, emotions, and woman-centered relationships occupy the entirety of the novel. This novel brings to us a fullness and depth, showing us black women who, in many ways, were “unaware of the richness they held” (Walker 232). The Womanist prose of Alice Walker describes women of this persuasion as having been removed from society. She writes:

they stumbled blindly through their lives: creatures so abused and mutilated in body, so dimmed and confused by pain, that they considered themselves unworthy of even hope. In the selfless abstractions their bodies became to the men who used them, they became more than “sexual objects,” they became “Saints.” Instead of being perceived as whole persons, their bodies became shrines: what was thought to be their minds became temples suitable for worship. (Walker 232)

*The Final Passage* manages to capture and more explicitly depict all the complexities presented by Alice Walker. All of the women in the novel portray multiple aspects of black womanhood, and are drawn at different positions as the text moves between Pro-woman(ist) and complicitous portrayals. The women’s actions are often assertive and gender non-conforming, but the narrative refers to them in disdainful ways at times.

Of his writing women’s voices Phillips said, in an interview with Carol Margaret Davision, “women’s position on the edge of society—both central in society, but also marginalized by men—seems to me, in some way, to mirror the rather tenuous and oscillating relationship that all sorts of people, in this case, specifically black people, have in society” (*Conversations with Caryl Phillips* 21). These oscillations are most prevalent for black women in Phillips’s first novel. More importantly, *The Final Passage* arguably represents the author’s most Pro-woman(ist) work in the way that it, according to Alice Walker, “appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counter-balance of laughter), and women’s strength” (xi). Furthermore, it is a text which approaches the wholeness of black love as a counterpoint to the dysfunction in which most of the characters are mired. Of the few works of scholarship exploring *The Final Passage*,[[18]](#endnote-18) none exclusively considers the state or condition of black womanhood, the most central aspect of the work. The novel begins and ends with Leila and her baby Calvin linked together alone in the world as mother and son. This highlighting of the maternal role cements the text as Pro-woman(ist), even as the novel engages multiple aspects of the women’s experiences.

Leila, much like Lottie and Ada, remains intimately connected to a man who primarily offers her ambivalence or indifference. We are told “her first night as a married woman had passed without incident” (57). In fact, Leila had spent the night alone with the full knowledge that her new husband would not come to her, and for the entirety of the novel she continues to pine for him as he draws further and further away from her. Not all the women endure the same fate as Leila, however, nor do they endure their own in the passive way that she does. As a Pro-woman(ist) text, *The Final Passage* offers multiple characters who serve to balance and arbitrate the power (or lack thereof ) of the women. Leila’s closest friend, whom she considers a sister, is Millie, and she functions in direct contrast to Leila. Millie is happily partnered with Bradeth, a man who was pleased to marry her, is attentive to both Millie and their child, and even advocates for Leila with her husband Michael. Millie repeatedly confronts Leila’s naiveté and passivity, and she stands as not only the most assertive but also the most loving person in Leila’s life. The novel portrays the women living together, caring for their children side by side, and sharing laughter and tears. Millie’s commitment to her friend is often represented throughout the text even if not stated directly each time as in the early section of the novel when Millie says “Don’t worry…there’s two of us now and we’ll both get by. We’ll manage” (71). Millie, and to some extent Bradeth, becomes the most stable relationship for Leila. These women come to represent what Patricia Hill Collins, author of *Black Feminist Thought*, has noted is a “collective wisdom” with the possibility for a “distinctive group consciousness” albeit one not always articulated by all its members (28). Yet, even though the women individually assert themselves, the narrative voice often betrays the text’s overall Pro-woman(ist) pulse. The imagery, much like those portrayed via George Walker’s disdainful view of Ada in *Dancing in the Dark*, presents several women in unpleasant terms. Millie, who is not only assertive, but seems to be the most reasonable and rational character, is described as “small and spidery…with her bushy-up hair, which to comb posed problems” (23). Even the grandmother figure, often venerated and presented as noble in black literature, appears to us as haggard: “her legs were hopelessly bowed, her thick varicose veins running up and down their bruised and stubbly length. Her face was silent and black, blank, neither eyes nor mouth willing to capitulate to movement or betray emotion” (109). Even with these less than lovely images, the text manages to indicate that black women’s suffering was ultimately borne by a white hand as signaled by Leila’s light skin color and supposed white father. In a few brief sections, the story of Leila’s mother comes to us before she dies. We are bombarded with a torrent of sexual abuses which ultimately led to Leila’s birth, all of which come to us when Leila is seeking her ill mother—in search of her mother’s garden, as it were, and we are reminded of Alice Walker’s homage to women whose bodies were “broken and forced to bear children” (233). This attention to the maternal remains at the heart of the text, and Phillips’s novel, in a Pro-woman(ist) mode, offers diverse perspectives on motherhood. While Millie and Leila form a sisterly co-mothering bond, apart from this union, Leila is simultaneously drawn as emotionally detached from her infant, even as she often clings to him physically. In addition, we are told that “Leila was not to know that her mother had never wanted a child” (125). The nuanced portrayal of these Black woman is furthered when the discussion of Leila’s mother continues with the revelation that “in fact, she had never wanted a man, for when she saw her first penis hanging with arrogance before her, a great-uncle, she knew deep in her heart that the coupling of man and woman would hold no fascination for her” (125). While Leila received no clear model of intimacy from her mother, she, like her mother, experienced and existed in a state of solitude. The intimate distance that shaped Leila’s relationship with her mother and with her husband Michael followed her from Sandy Bay on the island to their humble residence in London. We are told “these days he just seemed to use the house as a place in which to change his shoes and clothes…In England, […] he still did not want her” (174). As the distance grew between Michael and his wife, Leila attempted to draw nearer to her mother, but each of these relationships leave her unfulfilled. As the novel closes, we see flashes of Leila’s past experiences which resemble those of the women in Phillips’s previously discussed texts. Her regard for her body is shaped by her interactions with men as Leila is pushed and pulled by disdain and desire. We are told, “she would squeeze her own breasts and pretend the hands on the end of her arms were, for five minutes, not her own” (188). Unlike the women in *Dancing in the Dark* and *The Nature of Blood*, however, Leila closes *The Final Passage* with a semblance of Pro-woman(ist) optimism. She seeks employment, discovers that she is pregnant, and is moved by this gravidity to imagine a reunion in which she is, again, co-mothering with Millie.

Of the three novels discussed, *The Final Passage* stands as the most encompassing Pro-woman(ist) text even with its frequent unattractive portraiture of black womanhood. It presents these women in complex and sometimes painful romantic relationships, it shows the potential for woman to woman platonic love and sisterhood, and its ubiquitous presentation of the black maternal as healing, what Lemons would suggest is its most gender-progressive mode, makes this text firmly rooted in a tradition of Pro-woman(ist) writing. The question may be asked whether or not the author himself is Pro-woman(ist). Certainly, his attention to the plight of women is a signature of his fiction, but it could be also stated that Phillips’s portrayal reifies the very thing his writing attempts to counter. Here, a possible intersection of authorial intent and textual effect can be found as I set out to show what these three texts from three different decades reveal. That is, the experience and condition of black womanhood is a central thread in the corpus of Phillips’s work. Those experiences are not only painted in fully developed and complex ways, they are also, at times, deeply problematic, bearing the burden of a pervasive racism, even as the texts offer glimmers of hope which rest in sisterhood and black love.

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Notes

1. While there has been no thorough treatment of black women in Phillips’s work, several scholars have examined women’s voices in Phillips. Some texts include: Pilar Cuder Domínguez,“Marginalia: A White Woman's Middle Passage in Caryl Phillips’s *Cambridge*,” in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Conference of AEDEAN*, ed. by Pérez Guerra et al. (Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 1996), 223-227; Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Gendering the Oceanic Voyage: Trespassing the (Black) Atlantic and Caribbean,” *Thamyris* 5.2 (Autumn 1998), 205-231; Sofía Muñoz Valdivieso, ‘“She Listened as her Voice Unspooled in Silence”: Emily’s Truth in Caryl Phillips’s *Cambridge*,” in *Fifty Years of English Studies in Spain*, *Actas del XXVI Congreso de AEDEAN*, ed. by Ignacio Palacios et al. (Santiago de Compostela: U de Santiago de Compostela, 2003), 539-545; Marika Preziuso, “Do I Belong Here? Images of - Female - Belonging and Cultural Hybridity in Erna Brodber’s *Myal*, Velma Pollard’s *Homestretch*, and Caryl Phillips’s *Cambridge*,” *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, 4.3 (Fall 2005), 85-91. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. See Renée Schatteman. *Conversations with Caryl Phillips*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009, in which Phillips discusses this in several interviews, including Carol Margaret Davison, “Crisscrossing the River: An Interview with Caryl Phillips,” *Ariel* 25.4 (1994), 91-99; Jenny Sharpe, “Of This Time, of that Place: A conversation with Caryl Phillips,” *Transition* 68 (1995), 154-61; Pico Iyer, ”Caryl Phillips: Lannan Literary Videos,” (1995). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. There is an emerging and on-going discussion about the ways black male intellectuals, teachers, and writers work or have worked in black feminist or womanist modes. Gary Lemons, who will be referenced in this essay, built upon Alice Walker’s collection of Womanist prose *In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens*, for his ground-breaking studies *Womanist Forefathers: Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois.* Albany: State University of New York Press, (2009) and *Black Male Outsider: Teaching As a Pro-Feminist Man: a Memoir*. Albany: State University of New York Press, (2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Rather than expanding upon a singular definition of white supremacist ideology, I should note that there are several articles that deal with racism in Phillips’s fiction. Ashley Dawson’s “‘To Remember too much is indeed a form of madness’: Caryl Phillips’s *The Nature of Blood* and the modalities of European Racism,” *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy*, 7.1 (April 2004), 83-101; Dave Gunning’s “Caryl Phillips: *The Nature of Blood*’, in his *Race and Antiracism in Black British and British Asian Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 136-145; Helge Nowak’s “‘Naturally, their suffering is deeply connected to memory”: Caryl Phillips’s *The Nature of Blood* as a Grand Narrative of Racism and Xenophobia”, in *Xenophobic Memories: Otherness in Postcolonial Constructions of the Past*, ed. by Klaus Stierstorfer & Monika Gomille (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003), 115-133; Jose Varunny’s ”Disrupting Forces of Multicultural Social Order: Racism and Xenophobia in Caryl Phillips’s *A Distant Shore*”, *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5.1 (2013), 144-153. The author himself has produced considerable work in the form of essays that address these issues. See *The European Tribe, The Atlantic Sound, Colour Me English.* [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Patricia Hill Collins landmark work *Black Feminist Thought* had already been available for four years by the time Bergner’s essay was published. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. In *A New World Order: Essays*, New York: Vintage International, 2002, Phillips notes that “Fanon’s writings perfectly reflected my own anxieties, both personally and literary” (130). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. See Craig A. Smith’s “Scenes of Trauma: Violent Rites, Migration and the Performance of Afro Caribbean Masculinities,” Dissertation, University of Florida (2010) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. See George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2008. Print for a thorough discussion of “the subjectivity of black bodies under a white racist hegemonic gaze” (ix). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. See Deborah K King, “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology.” *Signs* 14.1 (1988): 42-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. See Eve A. Raimon, *The “Tragic Mulatta” Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2004. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. For a discussion of the mammy figure see Hobson, Janell. *Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. See Deborah K King “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology,” *Signs* 14.1 (1988): 42-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. While the women do not fit the physiological depiction of the mammy-figure, they are effectively made into mammies by virtue of their caring for and serving as surrogate mothers for their husbands. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Hillary Mantel’s caustic review “Black is Not Jewish” chides Phillips for supposedly equating black and Jewish suffering. She has suggested that his portrayal is a “demented coziness, that denies the differences between people, denies how easily the interests of human beings become divided,” and she goes on to argue that “it is indecent to lay claim to other people’s suffering: it is a colonial impulse, dressed up as altruism” (39). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. While I do not intend to construct Malka’s identity, I maintain that her race and gender sets her apart from others in her Jewish community. As such, I refer to her identity as Black/woman/Jew. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. See Edward Said’s, “An Ideology of Difference,” *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985): 38-58. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. For a discussion of stereotypical images of black womanhood, including the sexualized Jezebel archetype see Melissa V. Harris-Perry’s *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. See Horace I. Goddard’s, “Travel Discourse in Caryl Phillips’ *The Final Passage* and *A State of Independence*,” *Kola*, 22 September 2002; Rezzan Kocaoner Silku’s “Postcolonial Routes and Diasporic Identities: Belonging and Displacement in Caryl Phillips’s *The Final Passage* and *A Distant Shore*”, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 45.2 (2009), 163-170; María Lourdes López Ropero’s “Caryl Phillips and *The Final Passage*: From Windrush to Second Generation”, in her *The Anglo-Caribbean Migration Novel: Writing from the Diaspora* (San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2004), 81-96. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)