From Blurring to Transcending: Emily's Epiphany and Shaping of Community of Shared Future in Caryl Phillips' *Cambridge*

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Received: October 10, 2022 Accepted: December 10, 2022 Published: March 30, 2023

To cite this article: HE Na. (2023). From Blurring to Transcending: Emily's Epiphany and Shaping of Community of Shared Future in Caryl Phillips' Cambridge. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 056-068, DOI: 10.53789/j.1653-0465.2023.0301.008.p

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.53789/j.1653-0465.2023.0301.008.p

The research is supported by Research Grant on Representation of Communities in Caryl Phillips' Novels of Kashi University (No. 2020-1723*).*

Abstract: Caryl Phillips (1958-), a leading novelist in Contemporary British literature is acclaimed as one of the best-known and most talented Black British writers of his West Indian generation. *Cambridge*, his fourth novel and regarded as the most Caribbean and universal novel, has garnered flowering acclaims at home and abroad since publication in 1991. The article elaborates on the implications of Emily's epiphany from muti-perspectives framed within the framework of epiphany. Through a systematic study of Emily's epiphany, it is to point out the refreshing implications, namely, the affinities between the colonizers and the colonized, blur the epistemic boundaries and further indicate that through blurring and transcending boundaries, mutual empathy and telepathy could be evoked among people from different social hierarchies with a community of shared future for mankind shaped.

Keywords: Caryl Phillips; *Cambridge*; epiphany; Emily; community of shared future

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1 Introduction

1.1 Caryl Phillips

Caryl Phillips (1958-), has been acclaimed as "one of the best-known and most talented British writers of his generation" (Ledent, 2002: 1). Representing "the younger generation of Mustapha Matura, Linton Kwesi

Johnson, David Dabydeen and David Simon" (Birbalsingh, 1991: 40), he stands out as "the most likely Caribbean writer of his generation to be granted admittance to mainstream British literature" (Ledent, 2002: 4-5). His affinities for Black subjects and writing and the more international subject matter bestows a huge advantage over him and also grants him enormous responsibility to fill up the blank areas in the English realm and do literary and historical justice to the voices buried by the grand narrative. The thematic cores of his works range from the tensions, clashes between host and migrant cultures, the disruption of the family unit, and the inevitable conflicts between the first- and the second-generations of the West Indian immigrants to the larger transnational issues of Black Atlantic, the slave trade and its aftermath.

Molded by unique life experiences, he shoulders the responsibility of challenging the grand narrative, giving voices to those wiped out, remembering what the west would like to forget, working against an undertow of historical ignorance and building the bridge to link "the historical connections and contemporary reverberations" between the two societies through the sculpture of fictions (Birbalsingh 1991: 46). Commencing his writing career with *Strange Fruit* staged in 1980, he wrote a series of fruitful and dazzling dramatic works, including *Where There is Darkness* (1982), *The Shelter* (1984), *The Wasted Years* (1985) and *Playing Away* (1986), which were awarded highly acclaims and applause. Cambridge, Crossing the River, published in 1991 and 1993 respectively along with Higher Ground, can be regarded as a "trilogy" concerning the continuity of thematic concern and formal experimentation. With the publication of the series of fictions, Phillips reaches a considerably large audience and takes a firm step toward joining the literary giants of his time.

Cambridge, the fiction upon which the article is to elaborate, is situated between the first two novels and his later works beginning with Higher Ground. Like *The Final Passage and A State of Independence, Cambridge* reflects the colonial encounters with two essential voices in the special contact zone and ruminates upon the tensions, turmoil and clashes between the colonizers' cultures and those of the colonized. It bestows a potentiality of painful growth and mutual empathy on the historically polarized exploiters and exploited through the displacement which is a voyage into others and themselves.

1.2 Cambridge

Cambridge upon its publication in 1991 has garnered great acclaim. And Phillips was recognized as "a young writer of the year in 1992 by London *Sunday Times* and listed among "GRANTA's best of Young British Novelists of 1993" (Davison, 2009: 19). The novel is mainly composed of three parts with Emily's journal, her observations of the Caribbean colony taking up a prominent and dominant position, followed by Cambridge's confessional narratives and concluded with an official report on the murder case teeming with racist taints. The three independent and fragmentary narrative segments are framed with a brief and prosaic prologue and epilogue, contributing to a marvelous and major accomplishment of the "searing tragedy of ignorance and cruelty, forbearance and moral strength" (Phillips, 1993: 1). The prologue is written in the limited third-person point of view with Emily as the central consciousness. Emily, a thirty-year-old unmarried daughter of an arrogant, chauvinist absentee planter, upon her father's decision "she should travel to his west Indian estate and upon her return marry Thomas Lockwood" (Phillips, 1993: 3) is to embark on the forthcoming painful journey and unpredictable colonial encounters. Teeming in her mind is a complicated mixture of bitterness, complaints and hidden rebellions to escape from the stern and authoritarian father and flee from "the lonely and friendless regime

which fastens her into backboards, corsets and stays…and advertised her as an ambassadress of grace" (Phillips, 1993: 3−4). With the undercurrent consciousness flowing in mind, Emily initiates her voyages into others and into herself.

The most important section of the novel, which takes up almost two-thirds, is Emily's journal and observations of the colony. The section is a homodiegetic narrative with Emily both as the narrator and focalizer. Through her focalization and narration, Emily's liberal facade soon crumbles and her decision to discard the patriarchal garments falls prey to a more vicious mental corset of Euro-centrism and white supremacy. Confronted with subversive Christiania, she gradually realizes that her self-possessed complacency and superiority are strongly challenged and threatened. To keep the master position stable, she unconsciously surrenders herself to the mental maps marked out by the white chauvinist males, whether he is Mr. Donald, Mr. Rogers or Mr. Brown. By being the accomplice of them, she blindly ensures herself that her master status is kept whole and unchallenged.

However, by doing so, she not only gives up her authentic self and treats more viciously towards the slaves, but also estranges humanity and herself. What's worse, she does not realize that she has been economically and sexually exploited by white males, reduced to a marginal and peripheral position in society and treated solely as someone's daughter. Through the sequent painful plights experienced in the colony, she finally utters her authentic voice in the stream-of-consciousness form in the epilogue. She gains a brand-new recognition of herself, the reality and achieves mutual empathy with Stella; she grows and transcends her racist attitudes at last, which is volcanic and brilliant.

Compared with Emily's prominence, Cambridge's confessional narrative in the second part is rather like an absent presence. Written in the traditional style of the slave narrative, Cambridge recounts his vicissitudes from being kidnapped, and displaced by the slave traders from his Guinean home to becoming a domestic servant in England and his second transportation to the colonial plantation. With familial roots, home culture, and language erased and constantly fed with the colonial culture, Cambridge is severely afflicted by the white psychology mask and transformed into an alienated one with black skin but wearing the white mask. His exquisite mastery of the master's discourses conversely becomes a mental yoke from which he is never liberated. He holds fast to the Christian doctrines tainted with racism and naively pins hope of his salvation on the faith, hard work and generosity of the white masters. What he does not know is that he will never be accepted as one of the white race. Skin color is the boundary the colonizer will never be willing to transcend and trespass. He is the victim of the colonial system and double consciousness.

The third part is an official report of the murder case from the planters' perspective. It speaks of the brutal murder and claims Cambridge as the cruel and rebellious slave whose mind is destroyed by his fanciful Christian notions and his brutal action arises from his jealousy towards the relation between Mr. Brown and Christiania.

The novel, regarded as Phillips' most distinctly Caribbean novel and universal work, shows his great concerns with Caribbean issues. So far, the critical receptions are mainly upon the reconstruction of history, the thematic cores of displacement, ambivalent identity, belongings and diaspora, or on the narratological techniques. Few have extensively studied the central and conflicting focalizer and voice, that is, Emily, from the angle of epiphany. The article tries to elaborate on the implications of Emily's epiphany from the theoretical framework of epiphany. Through a systematic study of the implications of Emily's epiphany by a comprehensive

analysis of the external and internal reasons leading to her epiphany, it is to point out the refreshing and innovative values of the novel, namely, broadening the characterization traditionally depicted in Black literature, sublimating themes in this literary realm, proposing an indirect and suggestive way to deal with the legacies of colonialism and history. Emily's painful trajectory of epiphany implies the affinities between the colonizers and the colonized, blurs the epistemic boundaries; it further indicates that through undergoing similar plights, physically and mentally, mutual empathy and telepathy could be evoked among people from different social hierarchies, which germinates hopes for transcending boundaries to shape a community of a shared future (Jiao 2020: 118) and creating a promising future where people can treat each other humanely and respectfully (Yin, 2016: 72).

2 Blurring Epistemic Boundaries: Journey to Emily's Epiphany

The reasons which have been psychologically prepared for Emily's epiphany and final revelation are a series of closely related, cumulatively arranged painful encounters and existential crises occurring in the problematic interactions in the colony before she realizes the tragic failure in life, her self-possessed pride and superiority, pricked bubble of complacency and her exploited and marginal position within the chauvinist colonial society and gains a wider understanding of the meaning of life not only in her own situation but also in the black and other races.

2.1 The Atlantic-crossing journey

The Atlantic-Crossing journey embarked on by the protagonist Emily following her father's order initiates her voyages into others and herself. The dire journey from the centralized self to the dark heart of the colonial others stimulates the potentiality of her walking out of the mental garments and reaching a mutual empathy with Others. The journey plunges Emily into unusual surroundings which have the great potentiality of encouraging "the suspension of disbelief and promoting the reconfiguration of one's world's assumptions" and throws her into the unpredictable problematic interactions in the colony, leading to the alteration of the meaning structures that is the final epiphany (qtd. in McDonald 2005: 31). The similar plights, sufferings and losses undergone by Emily through the gross journey lay a possible foundation for her to transcend the limits of time and space to identify with the numerous buried black souls which have been lynched through the bloody and Nirvana-like funeral sea. The journey evoking the inner chords between her and the black souls is essential and fundamental in stimulating her final painful epiphany.

The deadly Atlantic-Crossing journey and the brutal and unbearable plights gone through by Emily strike her with a somewhat spiritual echo of the colonial Other and help her to transcend the temporal and spatial limits to form a responsive chorus between the historically polarized exploiters and exploited:

> Of late, I have thought much of this ocean, whose breast has supported many a ship heavy with slaves. The torn roots of these children of the sun have occasioned the stain of the institution to mark first their native soil, and then bleed across the waters to deface the Americas. There will be much to discover on arriving in tropical America… (Phillips, 1993: 16)

Traversing the bloody Black Atlantic, the miseries and scorching sufferings of the oppressors and the oppressed seem to merge together and the Manichean boundaries between master and slave, colonizer and colonized, seem to be blurred for the time being. The inner ripples evoked in her mental well by the dire sea journey usher her to step into the stormy rising-and-falling psychological processes, which are to be elicited by the subsequent painful and challenging encounters and problematic interactions she is to confront in the heart of darkness, and ignite the ray of promising hope for her final transcendence over racist attitudes and gaining the revelation in the end.

2.2 Colonial encounters in the contact zone

The colonial encounter with subversive Christiania embarrasses her, menaces her superiority and leaves her increasingly ill at ease. To bring back her superiority and restore her sense of honor as the sole white master in the plantation and consolidate the imperial security which has been jarred by "black wench", Emily unconsciously or intentionally unmasks her liberal facade, takes up the racial ideology of the chauvinist white males, and manifests her racial stance to the zenith. Her complacency as the superior master is fatally shattered and crumbled immediately after her confrontation with Mr. Wilson. The pains and injuries exposed to the authentic sordid reality make her perplexed, humiliated, and feel unsure of anything. The scorching delivery of the dead baby, indicating the climatic moment of her personal consciousness, eventually crushes her self-deception, makes her fully aware of her ludicrousness and leads to the painful epiphany in the end.

2.2.1 Challenged and lopsided by subversive Christiania

Emily, the one determined to cast aside "the backboards, corsets and stays" (Phillips, 1993: 3), fastened by the lonely and friendless regime by embarking on the journey has lapsed into the impenetrable mental traps of the colonial system filtered and internalized in her disciplined soul the moment leaving the British shore. When she is confronted with other people and places, the imperial, chauvinist and centralist attitudes buried deeply in her mind soon get the upper hand. Her self-deceptive pride incessantly reminds her that the white shoulders the glorious responsibility of purging the superstitions and savagery out of the backward places and the white's culture, education, technology and religion reign highly over others throughout the universe. Her self-possession as part of the selected people makes her feel that colonizing the savages' minds is rational and meaningful. Her identity as one of the superior and civilized white race convinces her to take all these activities and missions put forward on the colonial plantations for granted and interpellates her to fulfill the specific imperial role for the Empire's glory.

However, the bubble of her pride, vanity, complacency and deceptive sense of herself as a white master are menaced, jarred, undermined and pricked by the subversive Christiania. Her unsurpassed master status is challenged and threatened by the mysterious "black wench." The conflicting encounter makes her feel extremely awkward, furious, humiliated and helpless. The problematic interaction with Christiania evokes the existential crises and elicits periods of "emotional turbulence, instability, and feelings of anxiety and depression," which are catalysts for the final transformation (qtd. in McDonald, 2005: 31). The impenetrable mental fortress threatened and nearly fractured by the problematic interaction, makes a good preparation for her subsequent mental alteration and development, which are prerequisite for her final psychological transformation, that is, her epiphany.

2.2.2 Blindly pumped by the white Chauvinist males

In the four-time colonial encounters with subversive Christiania, Emily's pumping complacency is deeply injured. Each time it embarrasses her, menaces her superiority, and leaves her increasingly ill at ease. The successive encounters and injuries almost shatter her take-for-granted superiority and self-deception. However, the disciplined white consciousness ingrained at the bottom of her soul leaps out and makes her resort to any solution to bring back her sense of honor and dignity. Her encounters with the white males propel her to stand in line with them to keep the fractured and unstable identity as a whole and maintain imperial security.

The moral choices not only make her unconsciously take over the racial ideologies of the chauvinist white males, but also intensify her racist consciousness and pump her self-deceptive cognition to the zenith. The zenith-like self-deceptive sense of superiority and pride as part of the white race and her carrying out the race myths to a disgusting degree foreground her degrading sequencing fall to a sense of hell-like reality, of her failure in life and of the authentic position as the exploited and marginal one in the male society.

The profound chasm and disparity between the zenith-like sense of herself pumped by her blind taking over and standing in line with the white males and the hell-like cruel reality, the pathetic authentic role as a marginal female strikingly awakened by Mr. Wilson and the death of the baby make her completely lose her self-possession and leads to the final painful epiphany in the derelict Hawthorn Cottage. The psychological disparity and chasm between her deceptive fantasy as a master reigning highly over Others and her authentic self as the exploited and marginal Other in the male society will lead to the final epiphany with a new vision of herself, Others, and the world.

2.2.3 Painfully awakened by the death of the baby

Escalated by the series of painful, scorching encounters and experiences, with the rise and fall of the psychological development, Emily loses her self-deceptive possession and superiority, utters the authentic feelings buried deep in her soul and gains a brand-new vision towards herself, Others, and the surrounding world climactic in the death of the prematurely-born baby solely accompanied by the loyal Stella in the deserted and derelict Hawthorn cottage. The experience shatters her former life, makes it never the same again, and plays a climactic and crucial role in "reconfiguring her deeply-held world assumptions" towards herself, Others and the surroundings (qtd. in McDonald, 2005: 31). The painful existential crisis makes her realize that she is none other than a pathetic and subordinate fool who is sexually and economically exploited, and who is mercilessly taken advantage of and marginalized to the periphery of the society by the chauvinist white males.

The emotional rise and fall, the eventual desertion and abandonment accompanied solely by Stella to experience the pains and sufferings of delivering a prematurely-born baby in the deserted Hawthorn cottage knock her out of the deceptive mirage and realize her deformed fate which is rendered by the inhuman chauvinist society.

Just as she painfully claims that "I am not sure of what I am" (Phillips, 1993: 179), her confusing and perplexed wondering, "what was I?" gradually dawns on her that she is nothing but the nameless, suffering and powerless object, a textual other in the web of the western epistemology. Though being an upper lady, she has no rights but to surrender to the stern order of her authoritarian father by being sacrificed to a stranger "Thomas Lockwood, a fifty-year-old widower with three children as a mode of transportation through life," which is a similar form of bondage like slavery (Phillips, 1993: 3). Though as a master on his father's plantation, she is

actually regarded only as someone's daughter and has never been treated as a human being or paid any attention to her emotions buried deeply in her bosom. She is respected and treated politely by the white males simply because she could be taken advantage of for them to abuse the property belonging to her family. She is actually a puppet controlled by the males, and her voice is nothing but the males' voices filtering through a female's body.

Uttering that it is a mistake, she acknowledges that she is just like the deformed monster, an incomplete and flawed opposite of man. The painful recognition releases her deeply-buried authentic emotions, just as the certain relief she feels after delivering the pre-maturely born baby. The expulsion includes the racist attitudes constructed in her disciplined soul. The rebirth after the painful delivery and the expelling of all the deceptive sense of herself, Others, and the universe, along with Stella, the only one who has experienced various plights, the only one in the universe to extend warming care and concerns for her, the only one who can share the similar things with her as a friend, grant Emily great strength and courage. Fearing nothing, she extends her arms broadly and welcomes "the weight of another day… to endure the undignified melee of dawn and witness the death of the sun come dusk" (Phillips, 1993: 184). She grows and transcends her limited life to join with the wider meaning and destinies of the universe, which is volcanic and brilliant.

2.3 Rebellious and courageous temperament

Confronted with her father's imperious gaze and tyrannical decision, "she should travel to his West Indian estate and upon return marry Thomas Lockwood" (Phillips, 1993: 3), Emily silently protests and condemns that, "Papa, I have buried feelings…feelings locked deep inside of me, hopes that demand that I must not abandon them…Do you understand?" (Phillips, 1993: 4), which is also her resolute and rebellious choice to flee from the traps of "backboards, corsets and stays" (Phillips, 1993: 3), escape from being "the ambassadress of grace" (Phillips, 1993: 4) and cast aside the scorching burdens as a doting and lovely angel of the house "who should play upon the delicate keyboard, paint the water-colors, or sing, run the household, do the accounts, command the domestic servants and organize the entertaining" (Phillips, 1993: 3).

Instead of following her father's decision to depart the colony and return to the motherland to marry Thomas Lockwood, she determines to stay three more months to develop an 'affectionate' relationship with Mr. Brown, which is against the moral expectations the English society imposes upon the ladies and consequences of the social and moral transgressions are fatal for a female to bear up. Towards her father's endless pleas for her to return, Emily bestows an indifferent and rebellious attitude towards the consequences of her indiscretion: "To Thomas Lockwood? Papa dead? No… Papa's threat was never executed…but take me away to what and to whom? She giggled." (Phillips, 1993: 183) Flowing in the rebellious stream of consciousness is Emily's new vision of the colonial society as the racist, sexist and imperialist one who tramples upon the souls of the Black race and also upon those of their daughters.

Observing the shameful feelings filtering in the physician Mr. Donald, who takes a despised and contemptuous attitude towards her indecency, Emily ignores him and lies in bed without showing any response towards the chauvinist white male, but simply uttering, "Go Away, Mr. Donald" (Phillips, 1993: 181). Emily's rebellious traits propel her to have a brand-new recognition of her 'dear motherland' and of herself as the pathetic and downtrodden marginal fool. Her rebellion and courage also bestow her great strength to confront the

painful epiphany and open her arms to welcome "the weight of yet another day…endure the undignified melee of dawn…witness the dying of the sun come dusk" (Phillips, 1993: 184) as an independent human being. In a word, the rebellious and courageous traits not only propel her to achieve the epiphany in the end but also are prerequisites and crucial for her growth to be a new white woman.

3 Transcending Epistemic Boundaries and Shaping Shared Destiny

After a series of painful encounters and experiences that have jarred, menaced, undermined and eventually shattered her self-deceptive superiority as the white master, Emily makes a great leap from her own sense of herself to a much wilder perspective of the meaning of life not only in her own situation but also in the black race's and entire human beings'. She has been led to an epiphany--an intense psychological moment of grasping the reality-suggesting a concession and relinquishment of her pride, vanity and self-esteem and her transcendence over the barriers of race, class and gender. The revelation of self, Other and the surrounding circumstances in a completely new vision befalls Emily at the exact moment in that particular place. It is a genuine climax of her experience, to which any addition will be unnecessary and anti-climactic.

Her epiphany occurs at the exact moment, in the particular place and the unusual surroundings, which encourages the suspension of disbelief and promotes the reconfiguration of her world assumptions. It is associated with a wider social, political and moral perspective and highlights the thematic cores of the novel. Emily's epiphany occurs after delivering a prematurely-born baby solely accompanied by the slave servant Stella in the derelict and deserted Hawthorn Cottage. Her epiphany manifested in the memorable phrase of mind is narrated in a lucid and poetic prose style; whether the language or the content used to describe the final epiphany is nearly equivalent to those in the religious conversion, taking on the mystical and spiritual casts (qtd. in McDonald, 2005: 30). The essences of her epiphany are to have a brand-new vision of herself, gain a mutual empathy with Stella transcending the limits of race, class and gender and achieve a transformative recognition towards her motherland.

3.1 A New vision towards herself

Just as claimed by the psychologists, epiphany is an experience of profound change and transformation in self-identity (qtd. in McDonald, 2005: 45). In the final epiphanic moment, Emily painfully recognizes that she is a pathetic, subordinate child of larger growth sexually and economically exploited and marginalized by the chauvinist white society. After delivering the prematurely-born baby, Emily "sunk deeper into indifference, wrapping around her like an old and friendly blanket" as she "watched the lamp, its orange flame, the clouds of smoke, the soot blackening the roof" (Phillips, 1993: 181). The unpleasant thoughts, like the uncontrollable floods from the deformed memory, broke into her mind and tortured her suffering soul. She felt weak and empty, emotionlessly responding to Mr. Donald, "you may take it that I am not sure of what I am" (Phillips, 1993: 179).

In the dead of the night, Emily "climbed from her bed and stood naked before a mirror…powered with the light dust of neglect" (Phillips, 1993: 181); the ruined lines of her face tell her a story that does not please her. She shockingly finds that "beauty was in the process of abandoning her…but I'm not such a bad woman, am

I?… A mistake" (Phillips, 1993: 182). Emily painfully acknowledges that she has been sexually and economically exploited by Mr. Brown, and now she is abandoned with ruined lines left on her face. In the painful moment, she shares a similar fate with those whose only journeys were uprooting; in a near-mad state, she is brought into the stream of the past, transcending the spatial and temporal limits, and is warmly connected with her tender Isabella. In the carnival and irrational revelry, Emily feels relieved, joyous and liberated from the constraints of the mental traps fastened by the inhuman chauvinist and imperial society. Her emotions and feelings buried deeply and long are released and loudly uttered in the shining moments of epiphany, "Papa, was he dead? …To Thomas Lockwood? No. …and Papa's threat was never executed…I'm still here…take me away to what and to whom?" (Phillips, 1993: 183)

The name of the father and the bondage to be sacrificed to some strangers are turned upside down. Emily's painful revelation of her exploited and marginal position in the patriarchal society does not break her down but liberates her and bestows on her more strength and courage to settle her life during the remaining years. In the epiphany, Emily grows into a newly-type white woman who casts a contemptuous stance towards the inhuman colonial system and prepares to welcome "the weight of yet another day … endure the undignified melee of dawn…witness the dying of the sun come dusk" (Phillips, 1993: 184) with her friend more courageously.

3.2 Mutual empathy with others

In the final epiphanic moment, she gains a brand-new recognition of the colonial Other and achieves a mutual sympathy with them, transcending the barriers of race, class and gender. Her transformative attitudes towards the colonial Other, Stella, for example, is a vivid mirror recording the process of her painful psychological development till the shining-forth moment of epiphany.

On the first day when Emily sets foot on the colonial plantation, Stella is nothing but "a jet woman, who stood central to this activity in a clean white dress with her arms folded across a generous bosom…held herself as though the mistress, and stepped down towards me with a delicacy which mocked her immodest proportions" (Phillips, 1993: 26). To Emily, Stella is a loyal, dutiful and patient servant, typical of her people. Her veneration for the dusky maiden deepens only out of her reliance and dependence upon the honest slave. The stereotypical images labelled on the black race, such as the one with wanton looseness in sexuality and morality, are imprinted on Stella by Emily's oppressive fantasy; she feels excited at her racist assumption that "the father of Stella's three children remains a mystery…and the three siblings do not share the same paternal blood" (Phillips, 1993: 36). Though Stella shows her sincere concerns with Emily, the latter feels furious and humiliated when asked to address her as Aunt Stella. For Emily, the appropriated title not only contaminates the purity of her superior race, but threatens her unsurpassed identity as part of the white race, with whom "the ebony matriarch bore no relation and could not be bonded together with her aunts Mabel and Victoria" (Phillips, 1993: 36). For her, Stella is merely a sable black imitation of her dear Isabella.

The recognition of Stella on the day of delivery knocks Emily out of her ingrained racial barriers and strikes a mutual chord with her. Nobody but Stella accompanies Emily to go through painful and heart-breaking periods. Emily, lying on the bed, recalls that "it was a distraught Stella who carried the lifeless body of the child clear out of Hawthorn Cottage. It was Stella who rapidly committed the thing to the ground. It was Stella…something that the two of them might share…" (Phillips, 1993: 178). In the critical moment, it is Stella who journeys up with

her to the Hawthorn Cottage; it is Stella who has undergone similar plights with little notions of the whereabouts of her three children and could share the same thing and achieve a mutual chord with each other. The downtrodden and peripheral position and her victimization by the chauvinist and patriarchal society connect the two together and let Emily realize that only dear Stella is her friend with whom she shares the same painful affinities. Emily transcends her racial attitudes and gains mutual empathy with Others in the climactic shining-forth moment.

3.3 A new recognition of the motherland

In the final epiphanic moment, Emily has an acute awareness of something new, which she has been blind to. She has a trans-formative attitude towards her motherland Britain. Upon departing from the British shore and embarking upon the Atlantic-Crossing journey, she feels very proud of belonging to the most advanced and civilized nation in the universe and claims loudly that "I have no pride but that I belong to thee, and can write my name in the muster-roll of mankind, an Englishman…I still prefer thy clouds and thy storms to the spicy gardens of the Orient" (Phillips, 1993: 8). The imperial identity Emily has identified with and felt proud of is actually "the intellectual constructs by which leaders of opinions seek to identify the attributes that distinguish the people of the English from another" (Greene, 1998: 208).

The attributes particularly belonging to the superior race are liberty, freedom, advanced culture, education, civilization and rationality they are proud of. For them, it is "their glorious duty and birthright to carry not only good manners but the purest light of the Gospel"; and the British should act as civilizing agents to save these people from the peripheries of the British isles where barbarism and ignorance still prevailed, to educate them "in virtuous labor and in justice, and to teach them English laws and civility to leave off robbing, stealing and killing one another and to foster those people for civility so that they might move toward freedom, Protestantism and refinement" (Greene, 1998: 218–219).

With the white man's burden-bearing upon their shoulders, Emily takes it for granted that she should exercise authority over the colonial others for the civilizing mission. However, the experiences and encounters confronting face to face with the colonial Other and white race shatter her self-deceptive superiority as the white master; the sense of honor and unsurpassed pride are pricked and demolished by the cruel realities of the colony. The colonies, instead of being the sparkling jewels, are actually nothing more than "provincial Governments… subordinate to the Chief State" (Greene, 1998: 224). The smaller white colonists are "something less than full Britons…subjects of subjects…as people of 'vulgar descent' and unfortunate histories, the miserable outcasts of Britain" (Greene, 1998: 224). The white colonists far away from the motherland are also the downtrodden ones in the colonial system. The pale-fleshed niggers with destitute living situations and statuses are the best illustrations of the cruelty of the colonial system.

The similar plights undergone by Emily in the colony forces her to question the rationalization of the unsurpassed superiority held by the Empire and compels her to cast doubts about the civilizing expansion. While lying in bed after the delivery and asked by Mr. Donald whether she will return to "our" country, Emily responses critically, "our country?" In her deep consciousness, she judges the lovely former home contemptuously:

> The doctor delivered the phrase (our country) as though this England was a dependable garment that one simply slipped into or out of according to one's whim. Does he not understand that people grow and change? Does he not understand that one day a discovery might be made that this country-garb is no longer of a correct measure? (Phillips, 1993: 177)

In the painful epiphany, she questions the solely rational and correct criteria the British and the Europeans utilize to judge and appraise Others for making themselves as the absolute authority, which implies that she struggles out of the take-for-granted superiority and centrism defined by themselves. The painful voyage into others and also into herself helps her cast aside the racial barriers, gain a mutual chord with others and propels her to grow into a new white female, transcending the barriers of race, class and gender.

4 Conclusion

Emily's reconfiguration of world transformation and her casting off the deeply-held prejudices and perceptions of herself, others and the surroundings in the final epiphanic moment preceded by long periods of psychological fluctuations, emotional turbulence and turmoil, make her stand sublimely as a newly-type white female from the stereotypical ones who are molded in the mainstream slave narrative and women's travelogues. She is a representative of a new-mode communal being who would transcend the barriers of race, gender, and class, gain mutual empathy and connection with others, and have a great potential of trespassing various prejudices, harms and intolerance which are still prevailing in the contemporary society.

Ignited by the arranged marriage, Emily, the daughter of the colonizer, embarked on the travel to the Caribbean plantation. The trip to the colonized is intended as her rebellious protest against her demanding and careless father and patriarchy. However, the upside-down transformation of space across the Black Atlantic results in her confrontation with the true color of colonization, and leads to her harsh conflict with the colonized and colonizer at the same time and rips her from the hypocritical position as a colonizer. Near the end of the novel, Emily, through the painful voyage into others, into herself and into the darkness of the colonizer, lies in the bed of the derelict cottage with a dead prematurely-born baby lonely. While reminiscing about the hypocritical and suffocating manners of the females in the motherland, she painfully realized her victimized and tragic fate, just like the downtrodden colonizer mercilessly tortured and inhumanely treated by the white colonizers. Her journey of epiphany is a sarcastic writing back against the grand narrative in the West, as well as the formation of a community of shared future with the black colonizer throughout the history via empathy and inner connection, surpassing the constraints of gender, class, race and culture.

Through Emily's epiphany, Phillips tries to indirectly propose a way to alleviate the conflicting and deeply-rooted epistemic boundaries and shed light on the ones polarized in different classes, races and hierarchies to have the possibility of transcending their racist ideas, and attitudes, and gaining a mutual empathy with the trampled ones and germinating a new possible "community of shared destiny" with the potentialities to communicate, connect with others and treat each other respectfully and humanly. The method may be like the one Emily went through, that is, with personal courage and rebellion, through voyaging into others, experiencing painful encounters, undergoing similar sufferings as experienced by others, and achieving mutual empathy with people

from other races, classes, and hierarchies.

Only by transforming mental patterns, can it be possible for people to have a real understanding of the sufferings of others; through the painful voyages into others, more and more people can be expected to realize the impropriety of white dominant outlooks and evoke the potentiality to transform them with the possibility of rescuing more people from the suppression of the inhuman systems. Phillips Caryl Phillips, who grew up in post-war Britain and as the representative of the wind-rush generation, rewrites the silent history of the voiceless and displaced black people. He creatively reconstructs history in his fiction with the nonlinear and polyphonic arrangements. He hopes that through voyaging into history, disclosing the hidden ghettos of history, and raising the consciousness of the white and black, both of them could have the possibility of being liberated from the tyranny of racism and colonial hierarchies and build a community in which each other can share the same destiny.

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(Editors: Bonnie WANG & Joe ZHANG)