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**ISSN 2278-9529**

**Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal**  
[www.galaxyimrj.com](http://www.galaxyimrj.com)

## **Failed Post-Independence Unity: Violence, Trauma and Exile in Caryl Phillips' *A Distant Shore***

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13684443>

**Article History:** Submitted-05/07/2024, Revised-13/08/2024, Accepted-28/08/2024, Published-31/08/2024.

### **Abstract:**

Although contentions between and among different communities sharing the same place and time are a general sociopolitical phenomenon plaguing human society, they are more endemic and dynamic in the post-independence society. It is the case of Africa which continues to suffer from the legacies of European colonialist encroachment. Since the imperialist balkanisation of the African society by the Western superpowers following the provisions of the Berlin conference, Africa, notwithstanding her independence and the pan-Africanist discourse held by postcolonial luminaries, is still riven owing to socio-political and economic instability ignited by identity foreclosure, intertribal and enter-ethnic squabbles and civil wars and subregional conflicts which breed mass killings, genocides and exile. In *A Distant Shore*, Caryl Phillips lays bare such evils blighting Africa. The book captures the failed unity of post-independence Africa wherein different ethnic communities, sharing the same country or the same continent hitherto fail to hold peaceful dialogues leading to absolute reconciliation and rehabilitation of the broken bonds of brotherhood. They cannot be reconciled as one people and one community, united by ancestry and history. Instead of fostering peace and brotherhood after centuries of slavery, colonialism and colonisation, many African ethnic communities prefer ethnic pride to the continental union of Africa. This paper which uses postcolonial theory in the analyses argues that this failed post-independence unity and its inherent violence not only stakes the true African spirit of Ubuntu and its inherent communitarian living style but also causes some of the traumatised victims, the survivals of the fratricidal pogrom to take to other countries, especially to Europe in search for stability, only to expose their lives to other troubles prompted by European racism.

**Keywords:** Failed Independence, Pan-Africanist, Violence, Trauma, Exile, Racism.

## Introduction

In the wake of African independence, Pan-Africanists, in an attempt to transform the black continent into a great nation and restore Africa's lost magnificence and continental grandeur, strove to create bonds of brotherhood and solidarity among all African peoples and nations. Pan-Africanists were convinced that the union of Africa was the lone way to her true decolonisation and genuine development. Nkrumah (1963) declares thus:

For we have dedicated ourselves to the attainment of total African freedom. Here is one bond of unity that allies free Africa with unfree Africa, as well as all those independent states dedicated to this cause [. . .]. Since our inception, we have raised as a cardinal policy, the total emancipation of Africa from colonialism in all its forms. To this we have added the objective of the political union of African states as the securest safeguard of our hard-won freedom and the soundest foundation for our individual, no less than our common, economic, social and cultural advancement. (p. xi)

Unfortunately, since the sixties, the reconciliation of Africa is not yet effective. We still a dislocation of African national psyche (Ngugi 2009), p. 61) orchestrated by neo-colonialist disruptive forces, selfish and egocentric interests of African leaders engendering intertribal, national and subregional divisions, fratricidal conflicts and genocidal crimes as was the infamous case of Rwanda's genocide in 1994. The fratricide genocide "resulted from the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power (Des Forges 1999, p. 1). Thus, in some post-independence African nations like Rwanda, where political leaders have failed to unify the nation, ethnic groups are politically manipulated into fighting against one another, engendering fratricidal contentions and genocide. At the macrocosmic level, the diplomatic, bilateral and multilateral relations among African nations are still warped by dissensions, stunting the unity and the development of the black world. Such disagreements "perpetuate the Berlin-based divisions, with the result that even people of the same language, culture, and history remain citizens of different states. These states, in turn, often erect insurmountable barriers in the movement of peoples, goods, businesses, and services" (Ngugi 2009, sp. 88). Due to the warring climate wreaking havoc on African nations, the divisive diplomacy, border conflicts among African countries, Africa is still reduced to a hotbed of insecurity to be avoided by her children. They are bound to go into exile in search of security. They have a predilection for Europe, believed to be economically and judicially sound. Unhappily, when they take to what they believe is an Eldorado, they fall into another form of violence, especially racist attacks and murder. Glissant (1989) sums up all this as he underscores

that post-independence rulers are politicians “who created from a village or tribe huge empires and all ended up in prison, exile, or dependent” (p. 134). Phillips’ *A Distant Shore* is a depiction of such violence and its aftermaths, which prove how African independence has failed to unite and unify Africans divided by imperialist powers.

### **Divisive Conflicts, Trauma and Instability**

Phillips’ *A Distant Shore* recounts the traumatic experience of Gabriel, the protagonist who originates from Africa, a place ridden by physical violence, fratricidal wars and massacres. In Africa, there are two tribes which are demographically different: one ethnic group is larger than the other. The trouble begins when the members of the larger ethnic group start accusing the members of the smaller ethnic group (whose members wheel the economic and the political affairs of the country) of misgoverning and mismanaging the national heritage. Therefore, the members of the larger but poorer ethnic group started using seditions, insurrections and mass killings to reverse the socioeconomic and political norms and gain their share. Gabriel, who belongs to the smaller ethnic group, recounts:

We were the smaller tribe. We worked hard and we did not harm anybody. We tried to do what was best for ourselves, and what was good for our young country. We wanted only to live in peace with our brothers, but it became clear that this was not possible. My father told me they were jealous of us, for our people ran many businesses; not just in the capital city, but in our tribal land to the south. We formed the backbone of the economy, and therefore we had much influence. It was only after one of our people was elected to the presidency that the real trouble began; the killings. (p. 137)

So, the members of the larger but poorer ethnic group who believe the smaller ethnic group (whose member is the President of the Republic) robs their economic riches and political privileges, decide to use the argument of force to become politically and economic powerful. To this end, the larger ethnic group and the army conspire against the government and foment a coup in order to oust the President of the Republic from power. The result is the massacre of the members of the smaller ethnic tribe. The narrator relates that “the army rebelled, and the government troops spilled out from their barracks and cruised the streets in vehicles with machine guns pointing out of the windows. They began to drink and kill, and kill and drink” (p. 137). Gabriel’s father, who is traumatised by such barbarity adds: “Power has not gone to the heads of these soldiers, it has gone to their bellies. They are fat and fleshy. They do not know how to fight, only how to kill” (p. 140). Owing to mass killings orchestrated by the larger

ethnic group and the army, Gabriel's minority group which is exposed to genocide. Gabriel's ethnic group is terrified, lives under permanent fear, in distress and desperation. Gabriel's father for example, does not know how to deal with the situation. Since he is psychologically unstable, he does not care for his physical appearance: he does not mind the dress decorum and his physical smartness.

As he is strangulated by the socio-political upheaval wreaking havoc on his environment, he resorts to drinking, neglecting the dressing code. Gabriel witnesses it as follows: "My father looked directly at me as he spoke, but on his breath I could smell wine. Father did not know how to cope with this new situation, and there were portions of his cheek that he had forgotten to shave" (p. 137). In his depression, Gabriel's father is dishevelled: he does not care about his physical appearance. He just consumes alcohol to embolden himself to face the insecurity hitting his tribe. The alcohol intake is the tendency of the traumatised to personally treat their traumatic state to stand the fear of terror and horror. For Krystal (1995), they try to block the distress through self-medication (p. 86).

Being on the verge of ethnic extinction, Gabriel's people "whose blood marks them off as the nominal enemy" (p. 89) must fight for their stability, at least for the survival of the tribe. Although cognisant of the fact that his son runs the risk of being killed in this military adventure, Gabriel's father feels compelled to sacrifice his firstborn child Gabriel, persuading him to join the warfront to guarantee the security of the tribe. Gabriel explains: ". . . soon my terrified father had little choice but to take me to one side" (p. 137). Amidst fear and hopelessness, he tells his son: "You must go to the south and join our people there. Soon they will kill our president and their army will take charge. I feel this in my blood. Our one hope will be you men in the south [. . .]. You must go now. You are my only son and it is my duty to send you to the liberation army. You will be trained to become a soldier [. . .]. You are my only son and it is my duty to send you to the liberation army" (p. 140). Unfortunately, Gabriel will not be able to stand the terror and horror of the war. He witnesses it as follows:

I remained rooted to the spot and watched as Patrick led the men towards the village. Sometime later, I listened to the rapid firing of their weapons and the chorus of screaming from the villagers. Captain JuJu was right. I did not have the heart for this savagery. My father had sent me to fight, and I could fight and kill if necessary. But only if necessary. Now I had little choice but to make my way back to the capital and warn my family. Everybody knew that these were my men, and it was clear that the government troops would blame me for this massacre and take bloody revenge on my

mother and father and two sisters. This was the shameful manner in which we conducted our war. (p. 148)

The word “shameful” qualifying the intertribal war is a satire the author uses to shame the government and the warlike population (which use internal war against their brothers and sisters for their selfish interests) into changing. Phillips condemns such self-destructive infightings as they lead to Africa’s dismemberment and downfall. It is a shame that war which should be used against a stranger for the national defence and interest, is instead used against one’s brothers and sisters which ends up in hecatomb, national and continental chaos. Consequently, Gabriel who stands for this group loses all his family members to this war, which insinuates that Gabriel’s tribe has incurred genocide. Gabriel is utterly traumatised as he helplessly watches his two parents tortured and terrorised to death in front of him. Moreover, in his presence, his two sisters are raped to death. The narrator says that Jacko “the last to mount the younger sister. . .” (p. 85). The term “mount” is a zoomorphic term the author uses to indicate the type of cruel rape undergone by Gabriel’s sister. Through the use of this term, we understand the animalistic and barbaric acts of violence such as rape and other forms of tortures incurred by people faced with intertribal and civil war as is the case of Africa described in the text.

Through his text, Phillips also shows that intertribal war has severe economic consequences. In the text, the economic situation of the warlike ethnic group gets worse during the war. Felix, an influential economic member of the larger group has turned poor as a result of the war. The narrator discloses thereupon: “. . . once upon a time Felix’s store was the place to come if you wanted any household or electrical item. If Felix did not have it, then it did not exist in the country, but Gabriel can see that since the onset of the war his former employer’s stock has been severely depleted” (p. 89). Because of the ongoing war, the economic empire of Felix, one of the economic pillars of his ethnic community and of the country at large has shrunk. Felix’s wealth is now “a small bundle of United States dollars” (p. 91). He is a “nervous man” (p. 91) whose shop contains few items such as “Ill-matching saucepans, metal pails, batteries, garish neon torches” (p. 89). Felix witnesses it himself saying: “I am not a wealthy man, Gabriel. I have a wife and child and I know that soon I will lose what is left of this shop” (p. 91). Felix’s economic downfall proves that the selfish search for tribal glory not only leads to fratricidal genocide but equally to aggravating the economic condition of the population. It is thus clear that insurrections, hatred, when motivated by tribalism, cannot lead to stability. They can only leave young independent nations in ruins.

As the zone is violence-ridden, the economic diplomacy, importation and exportation policy, tourism, internal and external investments have slowed down, and Felix's commerce does not bloom. In such a country whose chief concern is military equipment and not the well-being of the population, the masses are unstable, tormented by gunshots, hunger and starvation. Patrick and his peers, for instance, are "fighting because somebody had given their family a bag of rice or promised them a car. For over a year they had simply eaten what they were given, and they had all lost friends" (p. 146). Gabriel who observes the pathetic scene says: "I walked to the shade of a tree and sat and closed my eyes. When I opened them it was evening" (p. 146). It is worth noting that Phillips shows in the text the correlation between wars raging in Africa and the economic crisis: how the former begets the latter. Ayinlola, Adeniyi and Adedeji (n.d.) write: "There are different dimensions of conflicts, of which armed conflicts have been identified as one of the major causes of instability with attendant effects on economies. [. . .]. The resulting effects of these armed conflicts have been a drag to the economic growth of many African countries" (p. 2).

Although Phillips' *A Distant Shore* tells a fictional story, it is well experienced in the colonised countries, especially in Africa as is painted in the text. In many African countries, political leaders in their search for power and riches, use the political tactic of divide and rule, then blindfold the masses into oppressing and suppressing one another in internal, fratricide wars. The selfish political leaders transform "the strategy of ethnic division into genocide" (Des Forges 1999, p. 1). As a matter of illustration, in Rwanda, in 1994, the Hutu (the larger ethnic group) was set against the Tutsi (the smaller ethnic group). The Hutus were inveigled into exterminating the Tutsis. The poor Hutus were beguiled into believing that the extermination of the Tutsis would yield political and economic privileges. Studies reveal that the Hutu "zealous killers were poor, drawn from a population 86 percent of whom lived in poverty, the highest percentage in the world" (Uvin as cited in Des Forges 1999, p. 382). Being hopeless, hanging "out on the streets of Kigali or smaller commercial centers, with little prospect of obtaining either the land or the jobs needed to marry and raise families" (Uvin as cited in Des Forges 1999, p. 382, p. 382), the Hutu "believed that the extermination campaign would restore the solidarity of the Hutu under their leadership and help them win the war, or at least improve their chances of negotiating a favorable peace [. . .] They were the first to kill, rape, rob and destroy. They attacked Tutsi frequently and until the very end, without doubt or remorse. Many made their victims suffer horribly and enjoyed doing so" (Des Forges 1999, p. 2), "killing nearly 500,000–800,000 people and leaving 4 million homeless, 2 million of whom fled to nearby

countries” (Tan 2023, p. 422). Unfortunately, the Rwanda’s civil war did not lead neither to the Hutu’s economic stability, nor to Rwandan economic progress. Investigations on the aftermath of this war show that “The stagnation brought on by the war aggravated the poverty of the region” (Des Forges 1999, p. 453). Thus, Phillips’ painting of these intercommunal or intertribal conflicts in Africa is realistic since the black continent is still “trapped in a never-ending cycle of ethnic conflict. The Rwandan genocide, Darfur, northern Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, and the violent aftermath of the controversial Kenyan elections, among other cases, seemingly substantiate this perception. As grievances accumulate and are defined at the group rather than individual level, the motivation for reprisals is never ending” (Aepenugo as cited in Quadri and Oladejo 2020, p. 123).

If some Africans have the fortitude to remain in their homeland fraught with violence and immiseration, Gabriel does not have. As already underlined, the survivors of such violence resort to exile, many of whom migrate to Europe. Such is the case of Gabriel, the lone survivor of the family. He is bound to leave his gory and immiserated country. He has to look for stability in immigration in the land of his historical oppressor, Europe.

### **Exile and Racism**

After the killing of all his family members Gabriel takes the resolution of leaving his homeland, saying: “I did nothing wrong, but I know I have to leave this country” (p. 88). It is worth observing that the resolution Gabriel takes to leave his homeland is commonplace in the violence-ridden Africa. Ngugi (1993) testifies thus: I fled into exile from the dictatorial regime of Daniel Toroitich arap Moi in June 1982, they symbolised the essential East Africa. It was April 1987, I had just arrived in Dar es Salaam from London via Harare, a guest of Walter Bgoya, and here I was in the midst of a group dedicated to Happiness. Only two months before, February, the Kenya police had siezed my novel, *Matigari*, and I was wondering what they would do to the author if they knew that he was now just across the border with the Happiness Club. (p. 159)

Gabriel’s resolution to leave his native country because of its unbearable socio-political and economic malaise suggests that the colonised world is a place whose people are “forced into exile through fear of certain death or prison” (Ngugi 1993, p. 105) or economic instability. Therefore, Gabriel goes to Felix, his friend and former employer, to beg for money. As Felix undergoes economic downfall, he cannot give Gabriel enough money. To help salvage the situation, he is doomed to assault Felix and snatch the little money he has in store for the



survival of his family. He then “picks up the rusting metal clock that hangs behind the door and he brings down its full weight onto the head of Felix. His friend lets out a stunned cry, but it is the noise of Felix’s body as it hits the wall and then buckles to the floor that alarms Gabriel. He tries not to look at his former employer as he quickly steps over him and then through the door which leads to the stairs. (p. 91). The criminal act of Gabriel is indicative of the fact that trauma and economic malaise can turn an individual into a criminal. As Gabriel is so miserable that he cannot afford the wherewithal for his migration to Europe, and as Felix has become poor (because of the economic crisis caused by the socio-political upheaval) and cannot give Gabriel enough money to migrate to Europe, Gabriel decides to commit this inhuman act.

On his way to England, Gabriel notices that he is not the only wretched, paupers leaving Africa. Around him, “he can see others in the tent who either lie on the cots or sit cross-legged on the floor” (p. 123). All these poor individuals have left their world ridden by violence, poverty and economic crisis for Europe, presented to them as the faultless world where economic prosperity awaits all foreigners, unaware that in Europe, another trauma and economic instability awaits them. Lamming (2003) elaborates on some of the reasons behind the exile of the colonised to Europe as follows: “We are made to feel a sense of exile by our inadequacy and our irrelevance of function in a society whose past we can’t alter, and whose future is always beyond us. Idleness can easily guide us into accepting this as a condition. Sooner or later, in silence or with rhetoric, we sign a contract whose epitaph reads: To be an exile is to be alive” (p. 12). Lamming’s quotation applies Gabriel and his travel companions, namely Amma and Bight: they leave their violence-ridden place for England where they believe they will be safe and happily live. Amma goes to Europe because her in-laws rejected her (after violent people had killed her husband and raped her). She goes Europe to bury her trauma and restart a new life (p. 130). As for Bright, he wants to forget his country where he incurred unbearable conditions in prison. Bright offers his testimony in these terms:

In our country they put me in prison and did terrible things to me to try to make me talk. If it was not for a cousin who brought me money so I could pay the guards and eat, I would not be here. I got dysentery from the one chamber pot that fifty of us were forced to share. I got lice from the damp mattress on the floor. The half-cooked rice in palm oil soothed my pain, but it made me very sick. I know we have all been afflicted, but I, this man, cannot go back ever. I hate it. I want to forget Africa and those people. I am an Englishman now. I am English and nobody will stop me from going home. Not you, not these people, nobody.” (p. 134).

For this African who is infatuated with England, it is only there that he will be respected. Picturing himself as an Englishman, he reasons: “Only the white man respects us, for we do not respect ourselves. If you cut my heart open you will find it stamped with the word ‘England.’ I speak the language, therefore I am going to England to claim my house and my stipend” (p. 134). The obsession the colonised subjects have with England is rooted in the colonial discourse which presented it as “The bastion of human civilization. England in the textbooks of Empire was a warm and welcoming land of freedom” (Fondo 2014, pp. 64-65). Unfortunately, the colonial discourse does not fall in line with reality; the London of textbooks is not the London individually experienced. In reality, it is instead a racist land where Blacks like Gabriel are unwelcome, tortured and eliminated. When Gabriel reaches England, he is rather welcome by racism which not only aggravates his traumatic state but destroys the expectation he had of England.

As he painstakingly reaches England, he chances upon an abandoned house informing him that Great Britain is not as paradisiac as he has always thought. Second, an English man accuses him of raping his daughter called Denise. Third, Denise’s father savagely beats him, the English police convict and lead him to prison officials for imprisonment as proves this narration: “He has done nothing wrong. They simply fell asleep, that is all. They slept. In the morning, the girl’s father led the police to the house, where he first attacked his daughter, and then began to beat Gabriel with a metal pipe until the police pulled him off. The procedure at the police station was swift and disrespectful. Gabriel was photographed, fingerprinted, then charged and told that he could make one phone call before being transferred to the local prison” (p. 188).

Once in prison, Gabriel is given the wildest form of torture, amidst name-callings, thirst hunger and ill-treatments. When, out of pain, hunger and thirst, Gabriel shouts for mercy, his white prison co-detainees answer him: “Shut your mouth, scums [. . .]. Drink your own piss. Isn’t that what you lot do in the jungle? [. . .] You fucking animal. I don’t know why they bother to feed you” (pp.95-96). Furthermore, the prison official bothers himself to give him some poor-quality food because “the noise of Gabriel’s demands becomes too loud for him to concentrate properly. Gabriel closes his eyes and tries to ignore his thirst, but after a few minutes he hears the door to his cell being opened and he turns his head and sees the night warder holding a metal tray of food. The man puts the tray down, and as he does so he spills some of the weak tea out of the plastic cup” (p. 96). Owing to these evil treatments, Gabriel cries and screams in pain. Instead of being calmed with kind attention and affection, he is tied to his bed and injected with

some weird medical substance. The narrator reveals: “Gabriel continues to kick and wrestle, but they easily lift their malnourished patient onto the bottom bunk and the warder reaches into his pocket and pulls out four strips of rubber. He passes two to the doctor, and they begin to strap Gabriel to the frame of the bed [. . .] Gabriel squirms as the needle comes closer to his arm, and then he flinches as it breaks his skin” (p. 83). The sentence “it breaks his skin” is synaesthesia which expresses the deepest, unusual pain Gabriel feels as the racist doctor injects him: if Phillips applies the verb “breaks” to the skin (which is not supposed to break), it suggests the indescribable pain and agony of non-white immigrants in the hands of racists. The suffering is so deep that the unbreakable human being is bound to break like bones. Had it not for the generous intervention of Katherine, a British female lawyer who connects him to Stuart Lewis, a British man in charge of immigration affairs, Gabriel would have died in prison. Even though he is set free, Gabriel remains imprisoned in poverty, being in a country wherein blackness is a curse, a deterrence to economic upliftment.

As Gabriel starts breathing the air of freedom, he meets Jimmy, a white man who, having seen him as a poor wanderer, employs him. He gives him some newspapers to sell in streets. Unfortunately, “none of the passers-by seem in the slightest bit curious and none of them will meet his eyes. And then, after nearly one whole hour of enduring people looking through him as though he did not exist, Gabriel decides that he will find his new friend and regretfully return the magazines” (p. 173). Through this racist act, Phillips brings into view the invisibility the Others of Europe in the European metropolis. Despite “the numerous contributions Black people have made to Europe and the world” (Hastings 2014, p. 19), their vast number in Europe: “there are an estimated 15-20 million people of African descent living in Europe” (Longhi 2022, p. 224), “either as working immigrants or people who established for generations, like the children and grand-children from the ex-colonies” (Longhi 2022, p. 224), Europeans do not recognise their full personhood, do not give them any chance to economically prosper due to the erasure of their existence by society and the European mainstream media at large. They are considered nonexistent, “especially in the broadcasting system, the name and the looks of a black or brown anchorman or anchorwoman. Seldom we see journalists and media professionals who are visible, vocal or who have leading roles in the newsrooms, those who have power in the production of content, and therefore in the way media influence society” (Longhi 2022, p. 225).

Being invisible through the commercial activity, Gabriel drops it and struggles to go the northern part of London. Gabriel changes his name to Solomon on security grounds. It is where

he believes he will grasp more economic opportunities. Although Gabriel changes his name to Solomon and meets Mike, a lorry driver who introduces him to the Andersons who warmly offer him hospitality, shelter him, struggle to find him official papers of permanent residence and, best of all, offer him their house (upon moving back to their house in Scotland) and Mike's car (after Mike's deadly accident), Gabriel/Solomon ends up in a gutter after a tragic racist assault.

Before the ultimate attack, Gabriel/Solomon starts receiving racist letters from unknown individuals. Gabriel/Solomon recounts:

There are now seven letters, including the one with the razor blades. Last night somebody introduced dog mess through my letterbox. They must have employed a small shovel, for it lay curled in a neat pile. When I awoke this morning, the sight of it caused my stomach to move and I rushed to the bathroom. These people are unwell, for decent people do not conduct themselves in this way. Writing to me with their filth is one thing, but this is savage. They regard me as their enemy, this much I understand, but their behaviour is unclean (pp. 299-300).

Solomon who has become a permanent English resident and "the night-watchman for the Stoneleigh estate" (p. 56) does not believe he can still be subject to racist attacks from the people he guards in the night, whose sick people he volunteers to carry to hospital with his car can be the ones writing him such racist letters. The racist lobbies who have sent secret letters are Paul and his partners in crime, Dale and Gordon. The latter send Carla, Paul's girlfriend to call the negro to help them push their car which has broken down. Once Gabriel/Solomon is out, they mortally attack him. Carla recounts this to Dorothy, Solomon's disconsolate lover in these terms: "Paul and his mates, Dale and Gordon. I knocked on the black guy's door and asked him to give us a hand pushing Paul's van as it wouldn't start. He was okay about it, but when he came out they jumped him and tied him up (p. 54). As if tying him up is not enough, the racist scums "drove him down to the canal, then out towards the quarry. They just wanted to have some fun, but when they opened the back of the van to let him out, he went nuts [ . . . ]. He'd undone the ropes and he started to attack them like a madman. It was scary, and he was shouting and carrying on, and then he had a go at Paul. The others grabbed him and then Paul bricked him" (p. 54). And all Paul's friends "started to brick him, but it didn't take long before he wasn't moving no more" (p. 54). The racist scene is so horrific that Carla, the eyewitness, takes fright. She carries on, saying: "Miss, I was scared. I didn't know what to do, but Paul said it was self-defence and they'd be okay. But the others didn't want to know, so they decided to

push him in to make it look like an accident” (p. 54). The term “self-defence” is ironically used to arouse the attention of the reader on the racist reasons for which Whites eliminate black people like Gabriel. As Paul, Dale and Gordon have masqueraded the crime as an accident, there are no police investigations launched to identify Gabriel/Solomon’s murders.

From the above, Gabriel/Solomon is a victim of the imperialist apparatus nourished by the criminal diplomacy the Western world has with the colonised world. Gabriel/Solomon would not have migrated to Europe, would have migrated to another country out of Europe if his country had not been colonised by Europe and educated into viewing Europe as the centre of the Universe, endowed with fantastic economic opportunities. His migration to Europe and his tragic end should be the consequences and continuity of Western imperialism. Said (1993) states in this regard: “Imperialism did not end, did not suddenly become “past,” once decolonization had set in motion the dismantling of the classical empires. A legacy of connections still binds countries like Algeria and India to France and Britain respectively” (p. 282). For the scholar, contemporary migratory flux from the colonised areas to the European imperial cities are explained against the backdrop of European imperialism. He further argues: “A vast new population of Muslims, Africans, and West Indians from former colonial territories now resides in metropolitan Europe; even Italy, Germany, and Scandinavia today must deal with these dislocations, which are to a large degree the result of imperialism. . .” (p. 282).

## Conclusion

The above analyses point to the never-ending divisive forces, violence and trauma raising havoc on post-independence Africa, which obligate her populations to look for stability in Europe. Unfortunately, this dreamt Eldorado not only proves “a distant shore” to their stability but also another place of instability, awash with racism. Phillips’ *A Distant Shore*, in laying bare the intertribal wars leading to hecatomb, economic malaise, trauma and exile, proves that “Problems resulting from the cynical parcelling-out of Africa still remain, and can only be settled by continental union” (Nkrumah 1963, p. 7). Phillips’ denunciation of Africa’s disunity and its corollaries is simultaneously a call on African leaders to revisit their failed policy of a free and sovereign Africa. Although “colonialism fostered inter-ethnic consciousness as multiple opposing cultures were welded into a collective identity such as postcolonial African nation states ‘Rwanda, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Kenya etc.’” (Quadri and Oladejo 2020, p. 123), Africa which has more than six decades of independence, which is no more a place where an arrogant European King can obtain “permission to form the Belgian settlements into a ‘Congo Free State’ under his personal suzerainty” (Nkrumah 1963, p. 7),

must rise above the spectre of implosion and division, put paid to the demons of internal division, strengthen her internal diplomacy, and encourage sub-regional dialogues and fraternity. The conjugation of these brotherly actions will pave the way to her continental and international grandeur.

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