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The Adopted Daughter of Africa

A Close Reading of Joyce in *Crossing the River* from Postcolonial and Feminist Perspectives.

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Abstract

The aim of this essay is to explain why Caryl Phillips presents Joyce as 'the adopted daughter of Africa' at the end of *Crossing the River* (1993). This will be done by performing a close reading. This essay will focus on Joyce's actions and behaviour. Aspects of feminism and postcolonial theory will act as the theoretic basis for the analysis. The analysis of Joyce's character will be put in relation to the whole of Phillips' "Black Atlantic" narrative and to gender and third wave feminist theories. The analysis will show that Joyce, by breaking racial norms, renouncing her faith, defying her mother, divorcing her husband, and falling in love with Travis, is the person who defines hope in the novel. Her character, together with her son Greer, shows a path to reconciliation between races in the aftermath of colonialism.

Key words: Caryl Phillips, *Crossing the River*, slavery, postcolonialism, the Black Atlantic, the African diaspora, feminism, racism, hope.

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Introduction

There is a saying that insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. For things to change in society there must be people who are willing to break old norms and try a different path. This is true when it comes to the institution of slavery and its many consequences, such as uprootedness, racism, and ongoing discrimination. It is also true when it comes to the patriarchal oppression many women of all races live under.

The aim of this essay is to explain why Caryl Phillips presents Joyce as "the adopted daughter of Africa" at the end of the *Crossing the River* (1993). This will be done by performing a close reading of part IV of the novel. The purpose is to explore how the cycle of patriarchal and racist oppression could be broken by presenting alternative actions and attitudes. The analysis will show that Joyce, by breaking racial norms, renouncing her faith, defying her mother, divorcing her husband, and falling in love with Travis, is the person who defines hope in the novel. Her character, together with her son Greer, shows a path to reconciliation between races in the aftermath of colonialism. The focus of this paper is Joyce, an Englishwoman who falls in love with the slave descendant Travis, one of the three black characters of the story. She is therefore an interesting object to study from the perspective of gender and third wave feminism. Her life will also be put in context to the overall theme of the book of how racial domination has shaped people's lives through centuries and is still present in the twenty-first century in both colonized people and the former colonizers.

Joyce fails to live up to the moral expectations of a Christian British woman in the 1940s. She gets pregnant at the age of 19 and chooses to have an illegal abortion, as

she is abandoned by her married lover. His abandonment and her mother's coldness cause a chain of reactions where she breaks free from patriarchal, social and racial norms and dares to follow her heart. To come to a better understanding of Joyce's life choices and the role she plays in the novel, this essay will use a gender and third wave feminist approach to characterize this protagonist and assess how colonialism, slavery and racial oppression have shaped the lives of both the oppressor and the oppressed both then and now.

Both Joyce's own personal journey and the historical context of the novel will be analyzed. In the first stage, the focus will be on the historical background of colonialism and slavery. This puts the fourth part of the novel in context with the rest of the story and its many voices. Here the postcolonial concepts "the Black Atlantic" and "the African diaspora" will be explored. The next stage will focus on how Joyce fits into the story as an involuntary heroine. The setting of World War II in rural England will be examined as well as the way she breaks with racial norms of that time through her relationship with Travis, who connects her story with the story as a whole. The final stage will focus on the common connotations of anti-racism and feminism and the ways in which the crossroads of these two movements is put forward as signifying hope for the future in the novel.

Interviews with the author Caryl Phillips will be referred to, where he talks about the novel and his thoughts about it. Phillips was born in the Caribbean in 1958, but was raised in the UK, himself a descendent of slaves, who often writes about the experiences of peoples of the African diaspora in England, the Caribbean, and the United States. The next section will offer an analysis of this historical background.

Historical and Theoretical Background

"Colonialism" can be explained as "the practice by which a powerful country controls another country or other countries" (colonialism). Here the focus lies on the European expansion in North America and Africa and its consequences, since that is the historical framework in the novel *Crossing the River*. "The transatlantic triangular trade system" can be defined as "the trade that operated from the late sixteenth to early nineteenth century carrying slaves, cash crops and manufactured goods between West Africa, Caribbean or American colonies and the European colonial powers" (triangular trade). This triangular trade deprived Africa of millions of people and made their lives miserable as they were uprooted and scattered on the other side of the Atlantic. The slave traders and their countries of origin on the other hand became rich as a result, not least the British Empire. The underlying ideological basis for both the European colonialism and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the belief in the superiority of the white man's race and the capitalistic strive for more natural resources and cheap labor.

Such a profitable, deeply rooted, yet inhumane institution as slavery took a lot of time and effort to dismantle. The first big change was when the importation of slaves was prohibited in the US with the Act of Prohibiting Importation of Slaves from 1807 and the second when slavery was abolished in the British Empire in the Slavery Abolition act in 1833, freeing more than 800,000 enslaved Africans in the Caribbean and South Africa as well as a small number in Canada. In the US slavery was abolished three decades later in 1865 with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution. Even if slavery was abolished the consequences of it lived on in American society through the so called "Jim Crow laws" (1876-1965), in the South, which implied

racial segregation and discrimination against blacks. These injustices ignited the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 60s led by Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

Today we see another big movement called Black Lives Matter, which opposes police brutality and all racially motivated violence against black people. This latter movement shows that the vision that Martin Luther King Jr. talked about in his famous speech delivered on the 28 August 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, that his four children would "one day live in a nation, where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character" has not yet come true. On the contrary, the consequences of slavery still live on today as discrimination towards 'black lives' in America as well as in Europe.

Caryl Phillips' *Crossing the River* is a novel that describes different sides of colonialism and slavery. There is guilt on both sides represented in the prologue and epilogue by the disembodied father who sold his children to slavery and by Captain Hamilton, who represents those on the European side of the triangular trade system, who benefited from the slave-trade. Bénédicte Ledent, who has written an authoritative introduction to Phillips' work, considers his ability to describe both sides of colonialism and slavery as going beyond just writing from the margins of the empire: "Not only does he cross the river of his people's historical drama and watch it from the other shore, i.e. a different vantage point, but he also builds bridges to allow his readers to cross the river and to see the past and the present in a totally new light" (112). Phillips' intent to cover 250 years of consequences of slave trade from different sides will be analyzed from the point of view of postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism

In the present time and ever since the 1960s when most countries in Africa were decolonized and regained their independence, there has been a need for reflecting on the impacts of colonization and its representation in literature. In *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory* Peter Barry refers to a forerunner of postcolonial criticism, Frantz Fanon, who argued that "the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their past" (Barry 186). Barry concludes that "if the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one's own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued" (Barry 186). Both these steps are needed to critically evaluate the colonial period in history and the literary works of that time.

The book that was the starting point for postcolonialism as a theory (together with Fanon's work) was Edwards Said's *Orientalism* from 1978. In his highly influential book, he pointed out that Western travelers in the colonies often held an assumption of "the Orient" as a mythical place of exotism as a scientific truth. These observations would in turn be used to justify colonization, since the population was projected as being sexually degenerate or lazy (McLeod 22). In this way colonialism perpetuated itself, when these degenerate images of the Orient were presented to the Colonizing powers in the West. However, a new generation of critics were inspired to find new ways of reading literary texts from that period. They wanted to find out how colonized people were affected at a psychological level from being seen as subordinate and they looked into how literature was used to legitimize colonial oppression. They also investigated the mechanisms behind colonialism and especially the colonization of the mind and how it could be unlearned. According to John McLeod, it is not enough

for the colonized nations to declare their independence in order to become truly free from colonialism: “There must also be a change in the minds, a challenge to the dominant ways of seeing. This is a challenge to those from both the colonized and colonizing nations. People from all parts of the Empire need to refuse the dominant language of power that have divided them into master and slave, the ruler and the ruled, if progressive and lasting change is to be achieved” (22-23). This change that is required to decolonize the mind called for a new way of reading old texts.

Over time, postcolonial criticism has come to mean so much more than this, and here the focus will be on one of the aspects that McLeod outlines, namely reading “a text by an author who has migrated from a country with a history of colonialism or a descendant from a migrant family, which deals with diaspora experience and its many consequences” (33). Even if the colonizing period is over, its mindset and values still live on today, as well as the economic inequalities. These diaspora experiences will be explored in this essay, since what binds the four different stories of Phillips’ novel together from different times in history is the black experience of being uprooted and placed elsewhere not by choice but by a history of slave trade. This shared experience common to all African slave descendants of the Transatlantic Slave Trade called “the African diaspora” consists of a life in exile from the African continent.

The river

The river as in the title of the novel can be interpreted in many ways. In a metaphorical sense water is a symbol for both life and death, but it is also a way to travel to another continent to encounter what is on the other side. In an interview with Stephen Clingman, Phillips explains his obsession with water in his novels: “I’m interested in what brings us together and what allows us to meet each other, and water,

to me, is a pathway along which we continue to meet and encounter each other. I'd rather be on the path than at home at the beginning or at the end of the journey". (Clingman 117). In *Crossing the River,* the experience of being uprooted and placed elsewhere across the water is what binds the different life stories together. The crossing of the river is a point of no return, because once you cross it, "[t]here is no return" (Phillips 237), as the father concludes in the last few lines of the novel. In a simplistic literary meaning the river thus refers to the Atlantic Ocean that millions of Africans had to cross after being sold as slaves. In an abstract meaning it refers to the "Black Atlantic" a "fluid and dynamic cultural system" (Gilroy 71) that holds the various experiences of millions of slave descenders together. The identity as travelers of "the Black Atlantic" is an important part of black identity as Paul Gilroy puts forward when he claims that "these transnational *routes* provide a better way of thinking about black identities in the present than notions of *roots* and rootedness, which merely recapitulate the absolutist principles common to colonialist, nationalist and racist discourses" (qtd in McLeod 230).

According to Ledent the river can not only allude to the black identity as travelers as Gilroy points out, but also to each individual story:

> "it relates to the mental borders that need to be crossed again and again in order to meet others. The use of the gerund form in the novel's title further indicates that the discovery of the other and of oneself is an always unfinished process that cannot accommodate the complacent idea of completion" (Ledent 110).

In this sense each section has its own river. In "the Pagan Coast" and in the third part, titled as the book itself "Crossing the River", it is the Atlantic Ocean separating Africa

from the West. In the second section, entitled “West” it is the Missouri River separating slaves on the one bank and freed slaves on the other. In “Somewhere in England” there is no river as such, but according to Ledent there is “an invisible class and colour bar that comes in the way of human relationships” (111). She also states that “only an open-minded individual like Joyce can bridge the man-made river of prejudice and make it to the other bank” (111). Joyce’s crossing to the other side suggests a cross-cultural dynamic which gives the fourth section of the novel its justification as the longest one, as it points to a new way forward towards the future. Joyce is however guilty of an incomplete journey because when advised to give up her son, she does “the sensible thing” (Phillips 230). For it to be a global journey it needs to be done together with others and be backed up by the values and laws of society. In the next section the two sides of “the diaspora” will be explored.

The African father and his three children

In the preface and the postscript of the novel we get to know the voice of the narrator. He is a father who has regrets after selling his children to a slave trader. He cries out: “A desperate foolishness. The crops failed. I sold my children. I remember. I led them (two boys and a girl) along weary paths, until we reached the place where the mud flats are populated with crabs and gulls” (Phillips 1). This lament is echoed in the postscript of the novel creating a framework of remorse about a history that cannot be undone.

Since the novel covers a period of 250 years, we can conclude that the narrator is not a human being. He is rather the voice of Africa mourning his lost children. They are represented by three black people in the forefront of the novel: Nash, Martha, and Travis, placed in different continents on either side of the Atlantic Ocean in different

time-periods. Nash is sent as a missionary to Liberia by his former master in the 1830s (part I), Martha is on her way to the American West after being freed by her owner to search for her long-lost daughter later that century (part II) and Travis is an American GI posted to a Yorkshire village in the Second World War (part IV). The three protagonists of the novel are each on their separate journey but share the experience of struggling with the separation from their native Africa, or the memory of it, while trying to find their place in a hostile world. This separation from Africa happened only because their ancestors were sold to slave traders such as Captain James Hamilton.

The slave trader and his descendants

In the novel the slave trader goes by the name James Hamilton and in his letters to his fiancée we are exposed to how cold and pragmatic slave trade is from the slave traders' point of view. He gives testimony to how the slave traders gave the slaves numbers instead of names, and how many of the slaves died of sicknesses: "before midnight buried 3 more women slaves (Nos 71, 104, 109). Know not what they died of, for they have not been properly alive since they first came on board" (Phillips 124). In his letter to his young wife, he does however hesitate about the incompatibility between the Christian faith and the slave trade. He refers to his father who, according to Mr Ellis, hated the African slaves and who used to say that "the teachings of the Lord were incompatible with his chosen occupation, and that it was folly to try and yoke together these opposites in one breast" (119). This suggests that the white people also were affected by the slave trade through a burden of guilt that still lives on today, because while they were enriched by the slave trade and the exploitation of natural resources from the African countries, they no doubt had to put the Christian values of love and respect of one's neighbour aside while doing so. Not all the European colonizers were

able to see it that way though, and not all were remorseful of this cruel history of slave trade. In fact, the way of looking at the Orient as something other or inferior from the viewpoint of the more enlightened European civilization, as in Rudyard Kipling's poem "White Man's burden", still lives on today in the racist ideologies and economic protectionist thinking.

Feminism

"Feminism" can be explained as "the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim" (feminism). This definition does not just refer to the experience of women. It also refers to the experience of men within the larger system of the patriarchy. The first wave of the feminist movement started already in the eighteenth century with the struggle for political, social, and economic reforms. As a result, the role of women began to change, and they took on a more public role, fighting for their rights; among those, the right to vote and the right to education. The second wave of feminism that started in the 1960s sought equal rights and opportunities for women as well as greater personal freedom, such as the right to have safe and legal abortions and birth control. The second wave of feminism also started the feminist criticism of literature which Peter Barry states is "the direct product of the women's movement of the 1960s" (Barry 116).

According to feminist theory there is a distinction between sex and gender. As French author Simone de Beauvoir writes in her book *The Second Sex* "One is not born a woman; rather, one becomes a woman" (Beauvoir 301). Her claim is "that gender is a matter of identity, and it is formed through conditioning and socialization by the environment, that is family and cultural expectations, which in turn shapes our beliefs

and behaviours" (Barry 125). Consequently, if gender is a construct that society has made up it can be unlearned or at least challenged. Gender based expectations and ideas of men being providers and women housewives and caretakers can therefore be questioned and not something everybody should be expected to comply with. A paradigm shift was made possible thanks to the needs of the wartime economy in Europe and America. So, for many women this was a liberating moment. They recognized that they wanted to contribute to society by working and they probably enjoyed earning money. Up until that point many women were expected to stay at home and take care of the children. They were not able to make their own decisions about their own lives since they did not have the economic means to do so. After the war, the men returned, and the women went back to the domestic sphere. The fourth part of *Crossing the River* is set in the time of the Second World War and will be studied from the point of view of gender and how gender roles were changing and challenged in Joyce's life if not always successfully.

Barry explains that feminist criticism in literature can be used as a tool to question the representation of women in literature. Furthermore, in a section of feminist perspectives within literary works, Barry describes how women were supposed to act and behave, and in that way, be accepted as feminine role models: "The representation of women in literature, then, was felt to be one of the most important forms of 'socialization', since it provided the role models which indicated to women, and men, what constituted acceptable versions of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and aspirations" (124). Barry's statement indicates that women, mostly from an earlier time, should possess feminine characteristics to be acceptable versions of an ideal and follow society's constructed expectations. These expectations are also relevant in discussions of how to define motherhood and the attributes that are expected of a

mother. One might find it obvious that a mother should be loving, caring, and selfless toward her children. However, when a woman breaks those norms, her actions are thought to be very provocative. “Feminist critics also analyze power relation in texts, read it as political acts, and through that, they expose the extent of patriarchy” (Barry 116). And in patriarchal society women are always seen as the other or as different.

Freud expressed deeply sexist attitudes in his psychoanalytical theories regarding the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of women. But as condemned as he was by many feminists, some, for-example Juliet Mitchell in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974), redefined his theories to align them with feminist beliefs. She claimed that his theories did not “present the feminine as something simply given or natural” (Barry 125) but that sexuality is shaped by our experiences in childhood and that would mean gender roles are constructed in such a way as well. “Penis envy” is then not necessarily about the physical organ but is rather a symbolic representation of social power; it is a male possession but not a male attribute. Thus, social castration signifies a lack of power and representation, and though women tend to be more disadvantaged, men can be just as powerless” (Barry 125). Thus, for a woman “penis envy” is about wanting the power than men possess in society and for a man it is a fear of losing that power and control.

This essay discusses Caryl Phillips’ *Crossing the River* through a feminist gender perspective. It will do so by analyzing the character Joyce by using a close reading of the text and explore how she challenges and questions the gender roles and patriarchal norms that were assigned to her by society. The analysis will also apply the psychoanalytic concepts of “penis envy” and “social castration” and investigate how this idea comes across in the text in Len’s abusive relationship with Joyce. But there is

yet another layer of feminist issues that can be applied to the novel's fourth part, and it has to do with the inclusive mindset of the third wave feminism.

Third wave feminism developed in the late 1980s and early and 1990s built on the first and second waves but added more inclusive perspectives along the lines of class, race, and sexual orientation. According to Leslie Heywood and Jenifer Drake, "Third wave makes the inclusion of persons of various genders, sexualities, nationalities, and classes a top priority and combines elements of equity feminism and gender feminism in a grassroots feminism that still fights for equal access and equal pay for equal work but also seeks to transform the structures within which young people work" (Heywood & Drake 8). This inclusive perspective of the third wave feminism suits an analysis of the character of Joyce, who is marginalized by society but who does not comply with what is expected of her but overcomes racial barriers when she marries Travis. She is the kind of "white sister" that bell hooks calls for: "We knew that there could be no real sisterhood between white women and women of color if white women were not able to divest of white supremacy, if the feminist movement were not fundamentally anti-racist" (bell hooks 58) The third wave borrows from contemporary gender and race theories to expand on marginalized populations' experiences. It strives for equality for all, not just women. The connection between racial- and gender equality comes into light. Society cannot be equal if some individuals are left out. "So, feminism and postcolonialism share the mutual goal of challenging different forms of oppression" (McLeod 174). Here is where postcolonialism and feminist approaches to literature have a common meeting ground.

When asked in an interview whether he felt comfortable about assuming a female voice, as with Joyce and Martha, in his novel, Phillips responded, "I don't feel it

requires any particular strengths ---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, and maybe there is some kind of undercurrent of communicable empathy that's going on" (Davidson 1994).). Phillips' statement justifies moving on to exploring the voice of Joyce.

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Discussion

The voice of Joyce

The final and largest part of the novel "Somewhere in England" portrays one of the protagonists, Joyce, from 1936 to 1963. The justification for her being one of the main characters in the novel is her relationship with Travis, an American GI posted in Yorkshire during World War II, who is mentioned as one of the disembodied father's children in the preface of the novel. When asked in an interview why he did not give the voice of this section of the novel to Travis, Phillips replied:

> I tried to find a voice for Travis … I couldn't find him anywhere, but I wasn't prepared to invent a voice. It just wasn't working, and if it's not working, I don't care about balance for the sake of balance. You approach it through the route that seems to you to cut through to the truth. One thing I know is that Joyce was speaking to me forcefully, powerfully in the dialect I grew up speaking, which is Yorkshire. I understood that intuitively (Jaggi 26).

Joyce gives voice to her side of the story through her diary, and that is where her life story and inner thoughts are revealed. She has as a working-class woman in the 1940s little control over society and her powerlessness makes her want to protect herself

against those who want to control her. This strategy of self-defensive wit of hers is a way to protect her integrity, but it is also the reason why she has difficulties to interact with people. What she thinks of herself and other people in the story is revealed in her diary. This is a story telling technique that allows the reader to come very close to the forbidden thoughts of the unconscious mind.

Her story goes both forward and backward in time as if someone had taken all her notes, tossed them in the air and then put them randomly back together. Thus, it suits the overall non-linear construction of the novel. This fragmented narrative serves a purpose according to Ledent: “the gaps and silences punctuating of the text are not artistic failures but evidence of a complex fictional strategy that requires concentration and imagination on the reader’s part if it is to be effective” (115). The fragmented structure of the text thus leaves it up to the reader to fill in the gaps and create meaning. There is also a sense of that the past and the present constantly interact with each other as in the overall story with the transhistorical father and his children.

Several of Joyce’s fragmented entries deal with her life before Len and others with the marriage and honeymoon. She often also contemplates on the war propaganda, which she finds deceptive, and representatives of government that “talks to you like you’re mental” (Phillips 160). On the other hand, there is very little information about crucial events in her life, like the imprisonment of Len or when she met Travis at the dance. What is revealed about her background is that she grew up in the margins of society, without a father, in a working-class environment. As she is denied an education by her mother, she must work for a living when she is a teenager. She tries to find her own path in life, which involves taking bold decisions, like having an illegal abortion, a divorce from her abusive husband, which threw her out in economic uncertainty and an affair with a black man while still being married. These controversial life choices make

her far from perfect, but also admittedly courageous and generous, and these choices will be explored next, beginning with her relationship with Travis.

Breaking racial norms

Joyce and Travis' relationship is only made possible through a past of slavery, since they would not have met otherwise. Travis' ancestors were forcefully shipped to America by European slave traders and due to this dislocation, he was born and brought up in the USA. Many black American soldiers served their country overseas during World War II and Travis was posted to Yorkshire. These black American soldiers were sometimes looked down on by the English. However, when Travis and Joyce meet, she seems oblivious to the fact that a relationship with him would make her a target for other peoples' prejudice and discrimination, reflected when Travis says: "I guess you don't act like them in some ways…just different" (Phillips 163). Consequently, Joyce does not treat Travis differently because he is black, and his skin colour is not revealed until later in the story.

Her estranged husband Len disapproves of her relationship with Travis, as something seen as unnatural, even after granting her a divorce: "Before he left, he told me I'm a traitor to my own kind. That as far as he's concerned, I'm no better than a common slut. And everybody in the village agrees with him" (Phillips 217). Through Joyce and Travis' relationship the unnaturalness of crossing racial borders is revealed in Britain. In addition, they cannot live in America due to US segregation laws, prohibiting interracial marriage and interracial sexual relations.

Not just Joyce and Travis' relationship is disliked by the villagers, but also the children who were evacuated during the war. Upon seeing them, Len exclaims: "They can bloody well go back to where they come from" (Phillips 144). This utterance

reflects the villagers' reluctance to take on more hungry mouths to feed, and the decision is made to send them back. Joyce describes how the children appear to her: "before us stood a dozen frightened children, the farmers eyeing the husky lads, the girls and scrawny boys close to tears" (Phillips 144). This description shows a connection to a slave trade past, as the children were lined up ready to be sold with an "identification tag around their necks" (Phillips 144). This note of how farmers assessed the children's physical condition and economic potential, resembles how the slaves in the past were assessed by their prospective owners. Their identification tags around their necks are also a continuance of past events in part III of the novel when the slave trader James Hamilton referred to his slaves as numbers as a way of not having to treat them as human beings but rather as goods.

Len and the villagers are hostile towards outsiders, and the GIs posted in the village are not wanted there either. They are referred to as "bloody Yanks". But in contrast to the rough-mannered villagers they are portrayed by Joyce as more civilized: "They keep themselves to themselves, and when they meet us they seem polite … And a lot of them like to go to church. They dress so smartly it puts us to shame" (134). In retrospect, these soldiers helped save Europe from barbary, but were not appreciated for their sacrifice, at the time.

This hostility of the villagers against strangers affects Joyce as well. She is herself considered "an uninvited outsider" (Phillips 129) in the Yorkshire community where she lives. Her husband Len "hasn't bothered to introduce [her] to anybody" (Phillips 153), which contributes to her feeling of exclusion. Furthermore, her feeling of not belonging is also a result of her not knowing how to behave. She writes in her diary: "I have never been much good with people" (Phillips 154). Yet, as an outsider, she is able to be free of prejudice. For example, nowhere in her account of her meeting with

Travis does she mention that he is black. For her, he is different because of the position of his teeth.

Her exceptional open mindedness can be seen as both a strength and a weakness, for according to Ledent "it is the expression of naivety" (122). Her naivety lies in that she is unable to foresee the consequences of a cross racial relationship in the community she lives in and how it will affect her own life and the future of their racially mixed son. Therefore, she does not prepare herself for what might happen but instead she lets go of the defense mechanisms she had put up and lets herself love and be loved.

Joyce gives birth to a son after Travis has left for Italy, but she is denied the right to be a mother due to the colour of her son's skin. Although Joyce is a free woman in a free country, she is advised not to raise Greer as her own, after Travis' tragic death. Following his death, she is left without any defense, and only one week after Travis' death she gets a visit from a lady in a blue coat:

> I could see her looking at me and thinking, poor disillusioned cow. You'll be better off, love, with someone else looking after him. Trust me. I know what I'm on about. I mean, how are you going to cope? You won't know what to do now, will you? Let's be sensible. You're going to have to start a new life on your own. And so we were sensible, my son and I. My son who hadn't asked me to turn him over to the lady with the blue coat and maroon scarf. (228).

As she finds herself all alone in the world, after both her mother and Travis passed away, and with no money, since Len wants his shop back, she succumbs to the racial norms she broke when she married Travis and gives Greer up for adoption. This shows how deeply rooted these norms were in society at the time.

In this sense the social pressure that is put on Joyce is inspired by the same racial norms that made the other female protagonist in the novel, Martha, lose her daughter when she was sold off in an auction one hundred years earlier. During slavery, women were not allowed to keep their children and raise them as their own, because as explained by Huttunen et. al., African Americans were typically denied the authority to claim their family relations, and to uphold family continuity. During this era, "white woman's motherhood was sacred, whereas black women's motherhood was denied" (299). This kind of thinking affects Joyce too, even though she is white she must deal with how negatively a "coffee-coloured" child is perceived by society at the time and consequently submits to racist norms by giving up her son for adoption. So, for Travis, his journey across the Atlantic to a Europe perceivably free from discrimination ends up with the abandonment of his orphan son after his death. Consequently, the other side of the pond was not as open minded as he could have hoped for, because slavery and discrimination based on race is part of both British and US history.

Breaking patriarchal norms

Joyce's first encounter with patriarchal norms does not happen in relation to a man. Instead, it is Joyce's mother who lets her know her place in the world when she refuses her an education, as "apparently, there was no need to read so much" (Phillips 190). Joyce tries to protest "I told her that Dad would have wanted me to get my school certificate, and maybe even one day go to college. She just stared at me and said, how do you know? She spoke to me as if he were nothing to do with me" (190). After this, reading becomes Joyce's refuge, and a hide-away from her mother, and even if her mother hits her for it, she keeps on reading: "I'm just happier with books. They don't shout at me, or accuse me of anything" (190). The right to an education was an

important issue in the beginning of the first wave of feminism as argued by Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) In this story Joyce's own mother denies the right to education, which could have given her more personal freedom. This leaves her with no other option but to start working at the factory. Feminist bell hooks admits that the strongest patriarchal voice in her early life was her mother's voice and that women are just as much affected by sexist thinking and behavior as men are. She says: "We all are participants in perpetuating sexism until we change our minds and hearts, until we let go of sexist thought and action and replace it with feminist thought and action" (hooks, ix). Since Joyce's mother was a Christian who believed that God has ordained that women be subordinate to men in the domestic household, she did not help Joyce to find another path in the world, but to marry and have children. Here class also comes into account because as a daughter to a single mother in a working-class family, she had no choice but to contribute to their livelihood.

When Len proposes to her two years later, she marries him to enter adulthood and to spite her mother. Len on the other hand, as she suspects, marries her to secure a shop assistant for his store. However convenient this marriage seems at first, there does not seem to be any real love between them. In her journal, she regretfully confesses that even after their first attempt of a kiss at the bus station, she does not get the right feeling: "I should have known then" (131).

The marriage to Len turns out to be a power struggle between the two of them. Her selfish husband Len, who beats her and spends most of his free time in the pub drinking, arouses her disgust from the very beginning of their unhappy marriage, when he got lost driving home from their honeymoon. She says: "I hated him for doing this to me. Making me feel helpless and at somebody's mercy, reduced to being a bloody

beggar" (Phillips 143). This shows that Joyce does not want to comply with her given role as a submissive and abused woman. Granted that she starts to resent Len she is secretly jealous of the rich independent war widows at the honeymoon resort in Wales, who can hide away from the world, and share a female companionship. "They had each other. And there I was. I had Len" (141). Here is an example of "penis envy" on the part of Joyce. What she envies is the independence from men that money can buy. Money, or the lack thereof aligned with violence is two ways of patriarchy to keep women down. Len, who has a black lung and therefore is exempted from military service feels "socially castrated" as a result. He starts beating up Joyce to compensate for his loss of power: "He was playing at being a man. Secretly drumming on me behind closed doors. But I told him. The next time he raises his hand to me it'll be the last time" (159). As Joyce cannot beat him back, due to her physical inferiority, she instead refuses to share a bed with him and thus adding to his feeling of castration: "I didn't want Len near me. Not now, not ever" (171). The disgust she feels for him escalates after her only friend in the village, Sandra, is killed by her husband for becoming pregnant by another man. Len does not seem to be bothered at all by what happened and continues to drink with Terry, the man who got Sandra pregnant, at the pub, as if nothing had happened. This event, and Joyce's abortion are events that illuminate the fact that women pay the price of adultery, whereas men seem to go unaffected.

The killing of Sandra is a turning point in the novel, which made clear how much she despised Len. So, when her husband is arrested for black-marketing, she makes no effort to save him. On the contrary, when the inspector shows up, she gets rid of the eggs in the stream just to spite Len "I thought, it's a hell of an expensive way to spite somebody, but he bleeding well deserves to be treated with spite" (Phillips 172-173). When Len is sent to prison, she feels free, "something was lifted from me the

moment they took him away. My chest unknotted. I could breathe again" (Phillips 199), but she is despised by the villagers: "I returned to the village alone. To face their accusing eyes. I had not stuck by him" (Phillips 199). Yet, while her husband is in prison Joyce gains more personal freedom and she manages the shop by herself.

Breaking social norms

Joyce has an ongoing struggle against fate; being born a woman, in the time of WWI, raised by an emotionally detached mother, becoming fatherless as an infant. When she is abandoned by the father of the unborn child she is carrying, at the age of 19, her mother turns her back on her: "it was as if she just wanted to see what the noise was all about. And once she'd found out, she left and closed the door behind her" (Phillips 193). Due to her mother's religious beliefs that condemn abortion and the social shame that follows, her mother offers no support with the abortion, but instead turns her back on her daughter. As an act of anger for not getting any support from divine authority or from her mother Joyce stops going to church after the abortion.

Another way to break social norms is to enter an area, which at the time was predominantly male. She does that when she goes to the pub and sits in the corner alone. She contemplates: "I didn't use to do this when he was around. The pub was his place. Mine was above the shop, waiting for him to come back. The braggart. I don't think they ever expected to see me lower myself and come into the pub" (136). She even goes there to see Travis, after Len has come back from prison and has beaten her badly: "[Travis] was sitting in the corner with his friends. So, I went over and sat next to him" (215). So, not only does she enter an area that is predominantly male, but she also shows her swollen face to everybody at the pub and at the same time publicly chooses to sit next to her lover in front of her husband. This can be seen as foolish behavior, but

also very brave: “my heart was pounding away and I couldn’t catch my breath” (215). It is as if by then there is no social status for her to lose.

Joyce’s mental universe is different from other people because she stands at the side-line looking in and does not take part in social life. Even when she has the position of running the shop by herself, she does not interact much with people. In fact, she confesses: “their language goes right through me” (138). Despite this, she does not meekly accept her situation but takes brave actions to change it. She takes action to break free from God, authorities, her mother, and an abusive husband. In fact, Joyce is the illustration of a strong, unapologetic, and independent woman who shows fierce anger towards any kind of oppression.

A new way forward – hope

Joyce is a white woman but also experiences a kind of rootlessness, which is prevalent for the black people in the book, as she is a social outcast in the village where she lives. Her rage comes from her feeling of powerlessness and of being put in a role she does not feel comfortable with. She breaks the norms of society when she renounces her faith, defies her mother, divorces her husband, and falls in love with Travis.

She now stands free as an unprejudiced and open-minded woman who falls in love with a black man, who is quite different from her rough-mannered husband, and thus showing progress in eliminating discrimination against blacks. She marries Travis and gives birth to their son. However, she cannot become completely free. She succumbs to racist norms when she gives their son Greer up for adoption after Travis gets killed in the war.

Joyce and Greer meet again 20 years later. Their meeting, however awkward for both parts signifies hope for a better future, when: “the sons of former slaves and the

sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood" (Dr. King Jr.). The way to this "table of brotherhood" goes through Joyce in this novel. She is the one who paves the way to reconciliation and hope due to her unconventional choices and colour blindness. Gail Lows explains Joyce's significance for the entire novel: "The utopic vision of the last pages of the novel is inclusive, for Joyce who is English, and white is included as one of the many sons and daughters of the African diasporan community" (18). In the novel's last pages, she is mentioned by the African narrator as "my daughter, Joyce" (Phillips 237). She has now been fully accepted and adopted by the mythical African father as one in the family, who as one of the four offspring, arrive at the distant banks, loved.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to analyze Joyce as the person who represents hope in the novel, and who gets accepted as the adopted daughter of Africa, by the mythical father. As discussed, it is evident that Joyce alone, despite her anger, could not fight the patriarchal and racial structures that governed her life. The structures of patriarchy are made visible through the entries of her diary, for example in her cynical comments about the government and their war propaganda, and when she reveals what she really feels about her husband and the other men in the village, except for Travis. In this way she uses her diary to vent her feelings of defiance and resistance, but is only partly able to break with patriarchal, social, and racial norms. Her wish to get an education is not granted by her mother, and she marries Len to get away from her pious but emotionally detached mother. Although she is not able to live the life she wants, she makes some bold decisions to gain more personal freedom, when she has an abortion,

denies Len the chance to be intimate with her, and later is granted a divorce from him and follows her heart and falls in love with Travis whom she finds to be kind, gentle and loving.

The analysis has also established that she is brave enough to enter the male arena by going to the pub alone, to the dance at the military base, and when she runs the shop by herself, during Len's imprisonment. In the analysis both a feminist and a postcolonial approach have been used. The purpose of this has been to show different structures of oppression in the novel as a whole and in Joyce's life in particular, as she is the one who tries to break these structures. The study has focused on a character whose experiences are relevant for both the Equal Rights and the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. These movements share the same experience of, and resistance to, being marginalized and deprived of fundamental human rights, by racist and patriarchal oppression imbedded in the culture of the Western society and which are affect both men and women. Caryl Phillips does not just show us these connections through the novel. He also offers a way to reconciliation and hope, with the character Joyce a white Englishwoman who falls in love with the slave descendent Travis as an example. She displays strength and drive but chooses to give her son up for adoption after Travis is killed in the war. She is pressured to do so by racial norms, as he is "coffee-coloured". Even though she succumbs to racial norms in the end and is weak enough not to fight to keep her son, she is free of prejudice. For example, nowhere in her account of her dance with Travis, does she mention that he is black. In this way she undoubtedly paves a way towards the possibility for all to look beyond race and gender to meet each other as human beings, and not as members of any race or sex. This is what would help bring about real change in the world in the aftermath of colonialism and slavery. For as Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said in her famous

speech “We should all be feminists” (2012): “Anger has a long history of bringing about positive change, but in addition to being angry, I am also hopeful, because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to make and remake themselves for the better”. Both men and women have been socialized from the very beginning to accept institutionalized sexism and racism as norms of society. As has been argued in the essay, change is needed to let go of these norms and make it possible to live in a world of peace as equals with no regard to sex, race or class. To do so these norms need to be challenged. Joyce is partly able to do so, but she falls short as she finds herself all alone in the world. To bring about real change many more of us must fight for justice and equality for all.

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