

# POWER RELATIONSHIPS LEADING TO ALIENATION OF BROWNS AND WHITES IN CARYL PHILLIPS' 'THE FINAL PASSAGE'

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## *Abstract*

The double consciousness of a Mollatto girl Leila whether she will be allowed to lead a life of her choice as according to her design, plan and execution in the midst of such power points of political power, political status and political identity of the Whites with their double vision exhibited evidentially in all their interaction and communication created in her doubt for her own stigma of race, color, class or physical disability. Leila's double consciousness is purely personal that in her endeavor to meet her father and find for Michael a job for their sustenance and in it there is no historical or anthropological design of stronger roots with its dimension bordering on slavery and segregation along color line secondly an cultural retention.

Each and every domain of man is affected by the industrialized, and racial and institutionalized society. The breaches and disequilibria he encounters lead him to a conflict and imbalance with the other man or any relationship he holds well. The punitive power has become more of an economy suspended rights. Foucaultian thought also envisages this kind of analysis in his book *Power /Knowledge*. Power constructs and functions on the basis of particular powers, myriad issues, and myriad effects of power. It is this complex domain that must be studied (188).

A scrutiny of the treatment extended by the power points and primitive power will define the political identity of a man. The magnitude and difference in the distribution of power among the dominant and subjected in these power points will explain the cause of estrangement of the malcontented individuals in the society. The gaps in the power distribution will speak for itself then agony of the alienated that the weaker encounters and he has no courage to have a political identity of his own choice. He masks himself with the identity that his master imposes on him. This imposition is subtle in the democratic administration but the struggle prevails. The micro-political power point through its surveillance surmounts more forces on the labor and suspends him from making any of his own choice. He is alienated from his own desire or logics to identify him with any of the political ideologies.

The dominant capitalist class in its strategy of power seeking has certainly affected a number of actual pre-meditated tactics operating within the grand strategy to ensure their domination. Their attitude may reveal an alienated sensibility and indifference to scorn and callousness. In the process of achieving his goal of supreme power, the dominant may use and exploit others as mere tools to further his own purpose. So the dominant class becomes alienated or estranged ever from him according to Mrs. Christine Gomez in her Doctoral thesis, *The Alienated Figure* “Occasionally self-division and estrangement from part of oneself are seen in the power seeker, especially at the moment of choice when opposing tendencies contend within him, thus when the power-craze drives the individual towards alienation at one or more levels, the power seeker becomes an outsider or alienated protagonists” (12). The effect of the empowerment of politics over the individuals in the capitalist society is very subtle in the democratic government. The dominant forms articulation, which is effective in the normalization of the subjected forces as well as in the alienation of the dominant from the subjected and within the dominant group itself owing to the competition.

Sustained psychologically by the bonds of cultural heritage, the superior race maintained family, religion and social institutions which had great stabilizing force. Family stability, group unity and access to political machinery job in the industry and the opportunities gave the power and authority. This power and influence with the political identity facilitated individual opportunities and achievement. But the marginalized and inferior leading a sub human existence not knowing to stigmatize their social ideologies not being able to assimilate the identity of the higher race are isolated and became politically ‘pariah’ of the society.

In Caryl Phillips *The Final Passage* the town Sandy Bay is a land of uncertainty for intelligent persons. Though nature’s bounty reigns supreme in the island it does not give any guarantee of material growth for youngsters like Leila and Michael. The only jobs available for both young and old are in the sugarcane farms and in such an avocation the scope for prosperity is minimal and dismal. People of the island largely lead a hand to mouth existence and for them socio-economic-political ideology for leading a decent life is an alien matter and as such they are all beings put like a ‘chicken in a cardboard box’. The more they make any attempt for their growth, the more they lose their identity because in that island the chance of identification is remote and there is no role model for them in any walk of life to follow and imitate. For any expansion they have to leave the comatose island and go far America or England. And from the experience they undergo out of such foreign lands, will help to come back to their island and eke out an existence on the basis their knowledge and experience gained in their land. It was what Alphonse De Walters rightly points out in the novel “For a West Indian boy like you just being there is an education, for you going see what England do for she self and what she did do for you and me here and everyone else on this island and all the other island. It’s a college for the West Indians” (101).

From the above reference it is very clear that the island "... breed too many people who cut cane in season and happy to be rum-jumbo out of it" (103). Thus the maximum comfort the land could provide was rum for all and out of their habit of boozing all of them at best "... could rest against the cool but bumpy wooden slots which made up the white washed facade of the day to Dawn bar" (24). People of the island jostled in this bar after five and after their drink all would collapse and all the coordination of their body movements go out of their control but still there lies some beauty in their unique body "... the head small and packing like that of a bird ... bright and restless" (24). The black race of the island, though trampled under the ugly conduct of boozing, carried in them a restless and fiery imagination if given a chance would soar to heights in all endeavors. But they had to live in the midst of the land of dust without any water but dry damp brown soil "Michael eyed it suspiciously before stretching out his foot and grinding it into the dust so that only a damp brown patch remain" (25-26). In such a sterile land, there is no political programme to uplift the rank and file from their accursed existence and all are made to take to drink and banter on idle talk's banner in the outlook of their scheme of things. "What I am talking about is the goodness of life. You say life can be good ... beer done lick you down" (27). Though the government does not provide with any socio-economic factors for the betterment of their island people seemed to have lost their power of coercing the government and make it do something solid for the societal growth and it seems ironically tragic that they are fully pleased if they have a place to sit under the sun, drink beer, listen to music and talk. This tendency of theirs shows that the entire community of the island is epicurean in their character of 'drink, eat and be merry'.

On account of the lack of economic and social programmes from the government the people with their jobs as cane-cutters or fisherman continue their life as drifters and further they are not properly educated for a life of decency and decorum. And on account of this ignorance and illiteracy, Whites the owners of the farms exploit them and derive maximum labor for minimum wage and from that monotonous existence; they are left with no option except booze and feel gay.

In spite of leading such a meaningless life without any aim, or purpose, or desire to establish their might and potentiality all of them enjoy the freedom of taking to drinks. Thereby they have lost in them their own identity as human beings and for what purpose they are born and what aim they have to fix and what desire they have to cherish are all relegated to backward and out of drinking they forget their miseries and this act also sinks their reason. For their rum-jumble existence the political ideologies on their land are greatly responsible because it never tries to enforce discipline on their character either through education or through legal act of curbing their infinite taste for liquor. It is because of the geographical pattern of the island. "Sometimes a road between Sandy Bay and St Patrick's was fenced in on one side, sometimes on both, sometimes neither but more often than not the mountain side of the road offered no view and it was like riding through a partially constructed tunnel" (31). People are compelled to live in such a place of hardship where the road at time fenced on one side, at times on both but for those who live on mountain no safety is guaranteed and they have to side their way through a tunnel. Leila is a servant in one of the offices

of the government department and she is not given a decent salary, this can be seen from the description of the house “There were no pictures on the bare wall, no carpets on the wooden floors, and at the back of a long, thin room stood two attentive doors. The door to the left led into Leila’s room, the door to the right into her mother’s but in this one rectangular room they cooked, ate, talked and read.” (31-32). As that was the condition of the government servant more pathetic was the existence of the masses was thus brought out in this passage “Men in grease stained felt hats and women in deceptively gay bandannas, their eyes glazed, arms folded, standing, leaning, resting up against the zinc fencing of their front yard, their children playing, racing scraps of wood in the liquid sewage, but the walk only seemed to get longer” (98).

Though the people of Sandy Bay have got the scope to interact with English and their customs, manner and culture they are an account of their wrong understanding perspectives of their worth they appear to be comical in their stature and their conduct funny in the midst of English people. This can be brought out in the following conversation between Michael and Edwin.

“Well, all you need to remember are, they treat as worst than their dogs. The woman expect you to do tricks with your biceps and sing calypso, or to drop down on one knee and pretend you’re Paul Robinson or somebody.”

Edwin took a long loud sip on his tea.

‘English people do wear overcoats in the summer and shot jackets in the winter and mark my words good, don’t put no money in no chocolate machines on the tube platform for it’s just a way of robbing off a colored man’s money’ ”. (168).

The culture of carrying the Caribbean activities to England also shows that even in the midst of the disciplined English community these men want to behave like staggering butlers because of their lack of realization born out of their improper education by the English in their native land. English neither teaches nor does black man aspire to be taught.

The divide and rule temperament would never allow the Blacks to forge unity in England. And they are past masters in isolating the friendship of the Blacks and make them lead a miserable life. Men and women especially Leila from Sandy Bay with all expectation depart to the land of prosperity, England and this expectation is made to germinate on their lack of growth and prosperity in their native land. Due to the paucity of the governmental plan neither they have complete knowledge of England nor they have any experience about England and they have only expectation of bright future for which they have to wait patiently for hours and aboard the ships without any guarantee of place on reservation.

On her arrival in the Victoria station a women in the Salvation Army offered her cup of soup but she did not accept “But Leila looked away” (145). Similarly whenever Miss Garden; the social worker tried to help her she brushed her aside this was because of her wrong conception of English Women and a preoccupation with Michael’s being tempted by such people and took him away from her.

The appearance of the White women who could spoil their husband on account of their external beauty did not create in her any revulsion but her own black appearance stood in contract before them that created in her a great disturbance and thereby she felt ill-at-ease. Her dark complexion in the land of the Whites created in her an alienation whose effect was deeper than the isolation she felt out of her husband leaving in the street in England because she carries in her in the traditional Mammy instinct for which there is no political dictates essential to bring her prosperity on the social plane because with his preservation instinct she would find meaningful life both for herself and her children in her native land where black community would receive her in warmth and affection.

Leila’s war ends with her decision to go back with her Mammy instinct rather fight with white is a declaration that let them be alone without her. Since war in the modern society is continued by war of other means. “The role of political power, on this hypothesis, is perpetually to reinscribe this relation through a form of unspoken warfare; to reinscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language in the bodies themselves of each of every one of us (90). So in democracy, the appearance of pseudo-peace is nothing but a continual warfare of a perpetual relationship of Power Relations.

### Works cited

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