



## Remigration: A Flammable Issue in Caryl Phillips' Novel a State of Independence

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**ABSTRACT:** Everyone who chooses the path of migration always suffers due to some cultural issues and feelings of belongingness. Gradually, people undergo the problem of hybrid identity and decide to take one more crucial step in life that is remigration. Migrants who come back to their land of origin are generally regarded as return migrants and the process is known by a particular term 'remigration'. Since they had left their native place years ago, they have to under go various barriers in re-establishing their identity and are also unable to assimilate in their native culture. Migration is the eminent theme of literature during present time but till now scholars have not penned any important idea about the issues of remigration. The issues of remigration are far away from the world of research which should be analyzed deeply. This research paper will observe the same undefined issue of remigration with reference to Caryl Phillips' second novel *A State of Independence*. Through this research paper, it will be observed that how people struggle to resettle on the land of origin and how one gets disappointed from own people.

**KEYWORDS-** Migration, Remigration, Belongingness, Identity, Migrants

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a term which is used for shifting of people in other country after abandoning their native country. The story of migrants does not start with settling in host country but it starts with the dreams and thoughts which an individual assumes for better prospects in the host country. The individual who migrates to England or America always has a longing for return to his Mother Country. This longing for return and nostalgia for homeland inspire migrants for remigration. Remigration is not separate from migration because it is only possible after migration. When an individual immigrates to his native country, the experiences of the host country also come with the person and it affects his/her life on native land too. It can be said that migration and remigration are inter-related as Thomas Hope claims-

It is important to appreciate the complexities of the process and to try to understand the nature of the dynamic of migration in its entirety including return as being not simply a further element of population displacement but as a phenomenon itself. (201)

There are various terms which are used for remigration such as reflux migration, second time migration, repartition, return flow and homeward migration. The homeward migration expresses the experiences of migrants who have abandoned their native land, whether willingly or unwillingly, to resettle in another country at a later time, go back to their native land. Going back to the real place is the process of remigration. People remigrate because of an unsatisfied life in the host country. They may earn money in host country but it is impossible for them to earn honour and feeling of oneness. Sometimes, people decide to remigrate because they want to stand their business in their home country. They remigrate with a hope for their better future but in most of the cases they find disappointment in their own country. The reasons of their remigration may be familiar, economic and nostalgic also. According to Stack, the reasons for which these individuals came back are various, involving "a dream of running a restaurant a passion for land, a midnight epiphany, rumors and lies weariness, homesickness, politics, sex, religion (7)".

The issues of remigration can not be analyzed without giving importance to the place where migrants really lived. Many individuals migrate in order to earn money and they assume that they will come back to their native land after earning enough money or getting well educated in the host country. People don't leave their homeland voluntarily rather they mobilize in search for better future. So, it is compulsory to understand the migration process in the terms of homeland. Remigration can be considered a negative factor because in the

process of remigration generally an individual is bound to feel inferior on his/her land of origin. In most of the cases, people don't accept those persons who have left their family a long time ago for their personal benefits. In short, remigration can be described as the ultimate result of failed migration experience.

In the context of English literature, many postcolonial writers have adopted these themes of migration and remigration in their literary works. They express the negative as well as positive aspects of remigration by their literary works. Caryl Phillips has made his unique place among such type of writers as he is a second generation British Caribbean author who has himself experienced the agony of migration. He has presented this agony throughout his works in both aspects migration as well as remigration. In his most celebrated second novel *A State of Independences*, he deals with the theme of remigration.

Bertram Francis, the protagonist of the novel leaves his land of origin and migrates to England as he is selected for a scholarship leaving behind his brother and mother on his island. He becomes happy and dreams for a better education and life in England. But England proves to be a failure to make his dreams true as he claims to his mother- "Nothing happened to me in England, you can believe that? A big rich country like that don't seem to have make any impression on me. I might as well have left yesterday for I just waste off all that time in" (Phillips 85). After living an unsatisfactory life in England for twenty years, Bertram decides to remigrate to his birth land when Caribbean was about to gain freedom. He comes back to his land of origin with a dream of establishing business and wants to meet his family and friends so that he can feel like home. But when he arrives on the island, he sees a completely changed vision of the island. People of Island behave with him like delegate. They are not ready to trust him because his countenance and behavior show that he is a Britisher. In the novel, Phillips expresses the agony of an individual who has been treated like a migrant on his own island. It is stated through an unknown character- "you are a delegate from overseas for the independence (102).

Indeed, the novel describes the problems of the postcolonial immigrant who has come back from the metropolitan center to the land of origin and is trying to re-establish himself. Bertram passes from the same critical circumstances on his own land as an immigrant passes by which in a host country. Bertram is categorized as 'English- West Indian' (Phillips 136) by his own friend. The term English- West Indian describes dual or contradictory identity format of Bertram and suggests his subsistence at the alliance between two entirely contrasting locations, cultures and their impregnation. It is with in these conditions that tension emerges in order to frame permanent identity. In spite of living for 20 years in England, he could not call England as his home. Bertram's present condition needs him to search for a stable identity which escapes forever. In this context, Robert J.C. Young claims- "fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption of conflict and change" (3).

When Bertram wants to escape from such situations and decides to settle a business in his own country, he again faces these same conditions. His own friend Jackson denies him to start a business or to look for any achievement. He clearly indicates Bertram that now he doesn't belong here so, the problem of belongingness still remains with Bertram. Jacksons says at the question of standing a business- "I can make it so damn uncomfortable for you that you going be better off taking a walk up Black Rocks and pitching off your money into the sea" (Phillip 113). His all dreams are crushed by these words. In the novel, readers see that Bertram wants to get up for demonstrating his identity but again and again his own people crush his determination to stabilize himself. He remains in a doubtful relation with the island as it is mentioned in the novel with context to his beloved and island- "he was as unsure about his relationship to her as he was about his relationship to this island he still insisted on calling his home." (Phillips 119).

Bertram feels like he has been caught in a trap of colonization. Every time, he recollects his determination and strength for standing again, he meets failure as his friend Jackson again claims- "England is where you belong now. Things have changed too much for you to have any chance of fitting back so why you don't return to the place where you know how the things are? You coming on here like a fool....." (Phillips 136). This sense of alienation begins from the very first day of his arrival on island. As the remigration officer asks to him- "how long you planning to staying here" (Phillips 12)? For a single day, Bertram does not feel like home anywhere neither in England nor in his own land.

It is regarded that a mother can not turn her face from her children. But in the novel, Phillips shows that in the case of remigration, the mother of Bertram doesn't seem happy on her son's arrival. Bertram's mother doesn't accept Bertram in her home and she starts conversing to him with a taunt- "And when you planning on taking off again" (Phillips 49)? His mother shows her annoyance on his leaving of island without her will.

These all happenings with Bertram prove that it is too difficult to construct an identity especially in the case of diaspora in spite of having the prevalence of nationalism, ethnicity or race that might serve as models of 'belongingness'. According to Mc Leod, such models-

No longer seem suited to a world where the experience and legacy of migration are altering the ways in which individuals think of their relation to place and how they might 'lay claim' to lands that are difficult to

think of in terms of 'home or belonging'. Instead, new models of identity are emerging which depend upon reconsidering the perilous in between position..... (214).

After finding disappointment from everywhere, Bertram's dreams and determination to resolve again on the island shatters and he survives in a split identity between Caribbean and English. The impossibilities of survival arises his sense of duality and discombobulation about his fixed identity and he becomes 'an outsider' on his own land of origin. Elen Machado Saez notes, "faced with the image of a perpetual migrant, Bertram is confronted with potentially dismal future; the never ending journey of the homeless (33)".

Indeed, through the novel Phillips presents the conditions which an individual has to come across after remigration. Generally, people suffer after migration but Phillips has deeply portrayed the suffering of such a person who has come back to his home after a long time. Phillips expresses that after leaving the homeland people can not make the loving relationship with the land of origin. So, remigration is just like migration in which it becomes too difficult to get homely satisfaction and oneness with own country and among own people.

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