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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BLACK DIASPORA ON DISTANT SHORES:

SHATTERED SUBJECTS AND FRAGMENTATION IN THE WRITING OF CARYL PHILLIPS

Thèse présentée par **Jawhar Ahmed DHOUIB** en vue de l'obtention du titre de **Docteur en Langues et Lettres** à l'Université de Liège et de **Docteur en Langue et Littérature Anglaises** à l'Université de Sfax

Sous la direction de Prof. Bénédicte Ledent (Université de Liège) et de Prof. Mounir Triki (Université de Sfax)

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ABSTRACT



The literature of Caribbean-born writer Caryl Phillips has gained critical prominence during the last two decades thanks to his texts, which meticulously depict historical, cultural and psychological facets of the black diaspora.

This dissertation takes as its prime objective the examination of overlaps between Phillips's representation of the diasporan subject and his use of fragmentation as a formal device. The different chapters of this thesis suggest that Phillips's writing bears witness to his creative rendering of the realities of the diasporic condition, either thematically, through a constant focus on migration and fluctuation between spaces, or aesthetically, through a series of techniques meant to convey the sense of fragmentation. In this conception, I would like to postulate that the experience of the diaspora and the fragmentation in the selected works of Phillips represent an inextricable duo.

To advance my argument, the first part of the dissertation is dedicated to addressing the thematic aspect of fragmentation. The first two chapters complement each other in that they take into account the subtleties underlying the various strands of the diaspora while covering historical, contemporary and even metaphoric experiences of migration and displacement. In turn, the second part of the dissertation is devised to examine the formal techniques that Phillips resorts to while formulating his vision of the diaspora. For this purpose, three overlapping chapters inquire into the multiplicity of points of view, structural disjointedness and generic fluidity, which are viewed as essential elements conveying the sense of fragmentation in the selected corpus of Phillips's works.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- ❖ *The Atlantic Sound (AS)*
- ❖ *Crossing the River (CR)*
- ❖ *A Distant Shore (DS)*
- ❖ *The European Tribe (ET)*
- ❖ *In the Falling Snow (FS)*
- ❖ *The Final Passage (FP)*
- ❖ *Foreigners: Three English Lives (Foreigners)*
- ❖ *Higher Ground (HG)*
- ❖ *The Nature of Blood (NB)*
- ❖ *A New World Order (NWO)*
- ❖ *Strange Fruit (SF)*

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