

## Abstract

## Crossings: Reading Women Writing Across Culture

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Women writers tend to be grouped overly simplistically together, either because they are women or because they are claimed by national or ethnic affiliations. However, their textuality is generally complex, especially with regard to cultural identity. This study argues that it is helpful to bring a variety of critical and theoretical responses to the reading of women's texts, especially when these are significantly reflective of complex cultural identity. The texts included in this study are particularly in need of this approach as they are unusually culturally complex and often marginalised by presently established modes of approach.

Whereas feminist criticism provides important underpinning for this study, it is necessarily here more useful when informed by other literary perspectives. Particularly important are an awareness of selected aspects of non-Western intellectual

tradition, cultural issues, postcolonial theory and Euro-American theory. These are chosen because they privilege complex awareness of identity and the possibility of productive contradiction.

The group of texts read here are all written by women in English, and all have strong connections with Africa, India and the Caribbean in some way. Both important differences and similarities between these texts are considered in detail, and the argument made that it is importantly beneficial to realising the identity of these texts to read them together.