

crossing the river caryl phillips

Crossing the River Caryl Phillips: Exploring Themes, Context, and Literary Significance

crossing the river caryl phillips is a compelling and thought-provoking work that delves into the complexities of identity, displacement, and the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. This novel, penned by the acclaimed British writer Caryl Phillips, offers a unique narrative structure and an evocative exploration of history's enduring impact on personal and collective memory. Whether you're a student of literature, a fan of historical fiction, or simply curious about the intersection of past and present, understanding this novel provides rich insights into cultural history and human resilience.

About Caryl Phillips and His Literary Approach

Caryl Phillips is a prominent figure in contemporary literature, known for his incisive explorations of the African diaspora and postcolonial identity. Born in St. Kitts and raised in the UK, Phillips often draws on his own multicultural background to inform his writing. His works frequently examine themes of migration, belonging, and the ongoing effects of colonialism.

In *crossing the river caryl phillips* employs a distinctive narrative style that blends historical and fictional elements. This approach allows readers to engage deeply with the emotional and psychological dimensions of his characters while also situating their stories within broader historical frameworks. The novel's structure is non-linear, weaving together multiple perspectives across different time periods, which enriches the storytelling and highlights the interconnectedness of individual lives and historical events.

The Narrative Structure of Crossing the River

One of the most striking features of *crossing the river caryl phillips* is its multi-voiced narrative. The novel tells the stories of three main characters: a European trader, a West African woman, and an African-American slave. Each character's journey is set in a different time period, spanning the 18th and 19th centuries, yet their stories are linked by the transatlantic slave trade.

Multiple Perspectives and Storytelling Techniques

By shifting perspectives among these characters, Phillips challenges readers

to see the slave trade—and its human consequences—from various viewpoints. This technique not only humanizes historical figures often reduced to statistics but also emphasizes the shared humanity that transcends time and geography.

The narrative shifts in voice and tense, sometimes adopting the language and tone appropriate to the character's context, which immerses readers in the historical moment. This method also reflects the fractured nature of identity and memory caused by displacement and trauma.

Symbolism of the River

The river in the novel functions as a powerful symbol for transition, passage, and the crossing from one world to another. It represents both physical and metaphorical boundaries, encompassing themes of migration, loss, and the search for freedom. The act of crossing the river becomes a metaphor for the painful journey endured by millions during the slave trade and the ongoing struggles for identity and belonging.

Thematic Exploration in Crossing the River **Caryl Phillips**

At its core, crossing the river caryl phillips explores several interrelated themes that resonate deeply with contemporary discussions on history, race, and memory.

Identity and Displacement

The novel probes the complexities of identity formation in the context of forced displacement. Each protagonist grapples with a fractured sense of self, shaped by experiences of loss, exile, and cultural dislocation. Phillips invites readers to consider how identity is continually negotiated amid the legacies of trauma and survival.

The Legacy of the Slave Trade

By setting the characters' stories against the backdrop of the transatlantic slave trade, Phillips confronts the brutal realities of this historical atrocity. The novel does not shy away from depicting the violence and dehumanization experienced by enslaved people, but it also highlights their resilience and humanity. This balanced portrayal challenges simplistic narratives and encourages a more nuanced understanding of history.

Memory and History

Crossing the river caryl phillips intricately examines the relationship between personal memory and recorded history. The fragmented narrative structure mirrors the fragmented histories of enslaved peoples, whose stories have often been erased or marginalized. Phillips uses storytelling as a means of reclaiming these histories and giving voice to those silenced by dominant historical accounts.

Literary Significance and Critical Reception

Since its publication, crossing the river caryl phillips has been widely praised for its innovative narrative form and its profound thematic depth. Scholars and critics have lauded the novel for its ability to bridge the gap between historical fiction and postcolonial literature.

Impact on Postcolonial Literature

Phillips's work has become a touchstone in discussions of postcolonial identity and diaspora literature. His nuanced portrayal of historical trauma and cultural hybridity offers a model for other writers dealing with similar themes. Crossing the river is frequently studied in academic settings for its stylistic experimentation and engagement with complex social issues.

Use in Academic Curricula

The novel's rich thematic content and layered narrative make it a popular choice in university courses on literature, history, and cultural studies. It encourages critical thinking about how history is represented and the ongoing effects of colonialism. Students often analyze the novel's use of multiple perspectives and symbolism, gaining insights into how fiction can illuminate real-world issues.

Tips for Reading and Understanding Crossing the River

Given the novel's complex structure and heavy themes, readers may find it helpful to approach crossing the river caryl phillips with some strategies in mind.

- **Take Your Time:** The shifting perspectives and timelines require careful attention. Don't rush through the narrative; instead, pause to reflect on each character's viewpoint.
- **Research Historical Context:** Understanding the transatlantic slave trade and colonial history can deepen your appreciation of the novel's setting and themes.
- **Note Symbolism:** Pay attention to recurring motifs such as the river and water imagery, which carry significant metaphorical weight.
- **Engage with Secondary Sources:** Reading literary criticism or interviews with Caryl Phillips can provide additional layers of interpretation and context.

Exploring *Crossing the River* by Caryl Phillips is not just a literary exercise but a journey into the heart of historical and cultural questions that remain relevant today. Through its evocative storytelling and profound insights, the novel invites readers to reflect on the enduring human spirit amid history's most challenging moments.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Crossing the River' by Caryl Phillips?

'Crossing the River' explores themes of displacement, identity, slavery, and the legacy of the African diaspora through interconnected narratives spanning different time periods.

How does Caryl Phillips structure the novel 'Crossing the River'?

The novel is structured into four interconnected stories set in different times and places, each focusing on characters affected by the transatlantic slave trade and its aftermath.

Who are the central characters in 'Crossing the River'?

The central characters include an African woman sold into slavery, her descendants in America and England, and individuals grappling with the consequences of slavery and migration.

What is the significance of the river in 'Crossing the River'?

The river symbolizes transition, displacement, and the forced journey of enslaved people, serving as a metaphor for crossing boundaries between life and death, freedom and captivity.

How does 'Crossing the River' address the legacy of slavery?

The novel examines the enduring impact of slavery on identity, family, and history, showing how its effects ripple across generations and continents.

In what ways does Caryl Phillips use language and narrative style in 'Crossing the River'?

Phillips employs a sparse, evocative prose style and multiple perspectives to convey the fragmented experiences of his characters and the complexities of memory and history.

Why is 'Crossing the River' considered an important work in postcolonial literature?

'Crossing the River' is important for its nuanced exploration of the African diaspora, colonial history, and cultural identity, contributing significantly to discussions of postcolonialism and historical memory.

Additional Resources

Crossing the River Caryl Phillips: An Analytical Exploration of Historical Memory and Identity

crossing the river caryl phillips marks a significant moment in contemporary literature, where themes of displacement, identity, and the long shadows of the transatlantic slave trade converge through the lens of Caryl Phillips' evocative narrative. This novel, emblematic of Phillips' distinctive voice, challenges readers to confront the complexities of history and its enduring impact on personal and collective memory. As a critical work within postcolonial literature, *Crossing the River* offers a layered examination of the African diaspora, intertwining past and present in a manner that invites both emotional engagement and intellectual reflection.

In-depth Analysis of *Crossing the River* by

Caryl Phillips

Caryl Phillips' **Crossing the River** is a multifaceted narrative weaving together three stories set across different centuries and geographies. The novel's structure—fragmented yet interconnected—mirrors the dislocation experienced by its characters and the broader African diaspora. Phillips employs a tripartite narrative to explore the devastating human consequences of slavery and migration, illustrating how these forces disrupt identity and belonging.

The novel's title itself is a metaphorical gateway, referencing both the literal crossing of the Atlantic Ocean and the figurative crossing from life to death, and from enslavement to freedom or despair. Phillips' lyrical prose and meticulous historical research elevate the novel beyond a mere historical recounting; it becomes a profound meditation on the endurance of the human spirit amidst systemic oppression.

Historical Context and Thematic Depth

Understanding **Crossing the River** requires situating it within the context of the transatlantic slave trade, a central historical trauma underpinning the novel. Phillips, a British-Caribbean writer, draws on this legacy to probe the multifarious experiences of Africans and their descendants. The novel's characters—a young enslaved woman in the 18th century, her white English descendant in the 20th century, and an African immigrant in contemporary America—are emblematic of the diasporic journey.

Through these narratives, Phillips explores themes of memory, loss, and identity reconstruction. The fragmented storytelling reflects the broken histories of enslaved peoples, whose voices were often silenced or erased. His exploration is not limited to victimhood; instead, it delves into resilience, adaptation, and the search for self-definition in hostile environments.

Character Study and Narrative Technique

Phillips' narrative technique in **Crossing the River** stands out for its use of shifting perspectives and temporal jumps. This approach enables a panoramic view of history while maintaining an intimate focus on individual lives. Each character's story is imbued with psychological depth, revealing the nuanced ways in which personal histories intersect with larger socio-political forces.

The first story centers on Silla, a young African woman forcibly taken from her homeland and sold into slavery in America. Her narrative is raw and haunting, exposing the brutal realities of the Middle Passage and plantation

life. In contrast, the second story follows her English descendant in the 20th century, grappling with the legacy of colonialism and racial prejudice. The final narrative, set in modern-day New York, follows an African immigrant confronting contemporary challenges of displacement and cultural alienation.

Phillips' use of sparse but evocative language creates an atmosphere of both immediacy and reflection. The interplay between past and present underscores the persistence of historical trauma, while also highlighting the evolving nature of identity.

Crossing the River Caryl Phillips: Literary Significance and Impact

Phillips' **Crossing the River** holds a prominent place within postcolonial and diaspora studies, often cited for its innovative narrative form and profound thematic concerns. The novel's critical reception underscores its role in expanding literary conversations about race, history, and memory. It challenges simplistic narratives about slavery and its aftermath by presenting a nuanced, multifaceted exploration of identity formation.

The use of multiple perspectives aligns with broader trends in contemporary literature aimed at decolonizing history and amplifying marginalized voices. Phillips' work stands in conversation with other seminal texts addressing the African diaspora, such as Toni Morrison's **Beloved** and Edwidge Danticat's **The Farming of Bones**. However, **Crossing the River** distinguishes itself through its structural complexity and geographical scope, spanning continents and centuries.

Comparative Perspectives

When juxtaposed with other narratives of slavery and displacement, **Crossing the River** offers distinct advantages and challenges:

- **Pros:** Its tripartite structure allows for a holistic exploration of historical continuity, and its restrained prose invites readers to actively engage with the text's emotional undercurrents.
- **Cons:** The novel's fragmented narrative may present accessibility challenges for some readers, requiring careful attention to temporal shifts and character relationships.

This complexity, however, is integral to Phillips' artistic vision, emphasizing that the history of slavery and migration cannot be neatly packaged or simplified.

LSI Keywords Integration: African Diaspora, Postcolonial Literature, Transatlantic Slave Trade

Phillips' treatment of the African diaspora is central to **Crossing the River**, as he delineates the ongoing repercussions of displacement and cultural fragmentation. The novel's postcolonial lens critiques the historical forces that have shaped racial identities and power dynamics across the Atlantic world. By engaging with the transatlantic slave trade, Phillips situates his narrative within a broader historical and cultural framework that underpins much of contemporary discussions on race and identity.

Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of **Crossing the River**

Crossing the River by Caryl Phillips remains a vital contribution to literature that interrogates memory, migration, and identity. Its layered narrative and evocative prose compel readers to reflect on the enduring legacies of slavery and colonialism. As a work that bridges historical epochs and geographical divides, the novel invites ongoing dialogue about how history shapes the present and future of diasporic communities.

Phillips' blending of historical detail with literary innovation ensures that **Crossing the River** continues to resonate in academic and literary circles alike. Its exploration of the human cost of forced migration and the search for belonging underscores the novel's relevance in contemporary conversations about race, history, and cultural identity.

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crossing the river caryl phillips: Slavery and the Cultures of Abolition Brycchan Carey, Peter J. Kitson, 2007 Slavery as depicted in literature and culture is examined in this wide-ranging collection. On 25 March 1807, the bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade within the British colonies was passed by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, becoming law from 1 May. This new collection of essays marks this crucial but conflicted historical moment and its troublesome legacies. They discuss the literary and cultural manifestations of slavery, abolition and emancipation from the eighteenth century to the present day, addressing such subjects and issues as: the

relationship between Christian and Islamic forms of slavery and the polemical and scholarly debates these have occasioned; the visual representations of the moment of emancipation; the representation of slave rebellion; discourses of race and slavery; memory and slavery; and captivity and slavery. Among the writers and thinkers discussed are: Frantz Fanon, William Earle Jr, Olaudah Equiano, Charlotte Smith, Caryl Phillips, Bryan Edwards, Elizabeth Marsh, as well as a wide range of other thinkers, writers and artists. The volume also contains the hitherto unpublished text of an essay by the naturalist Henry Smeathman, *Oeconomy of the Slave Ship*. Contributors: GEORGE BOULUKOS, DEIRDRE COLEMAN, MARAROULA JOANNOU, GERALD MACLEAN, FELICITY NUSSBAUM, DIANA PATON, SARA SALIH, LINCOLN SHLENSKY, MARCUS WOOD

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage* Maria Diedrich, Henry Louis Gates (Jr.), Carl Pedersen, 1999 This volume of essays examines the forced dispossession of the Middle Passage through the texts, religious rites, economic exchanges, dance and music it elicited, both on the liminal transatlantic journey and on the continent and eventual return.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Der Bär* Matthias G. Kausch, 1998

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Multiculturalism & Hybridity in African Literatures* African Literature Association. Meeting, 2000 This volume of essays covers all phases and geographical areas of African literature, including lesser known areas such as oral literature, literature written in African languages and Lusophone literature. Also included are articles on Caribbean literature, developments in South African theatre, and two articles on African film. Several writers receive special attention: Chinua Achebe, Maryse Conde, Wole Soyinka, Niyi Osundare, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Hampate Ba. Also included are the key-note addresses by Achebe, Conde and Osundare.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Romance, Diaspora, and Black Atlantic Literature* Yogita Goyal, 2010-04-22 *Romance, Diaspora, and Black Atlantic Literature* offers a rich, interdisciplinary treatment of modern black literature and cultural history, showing how debates over Africa in the works of major black writers generated productive models for imagining political agency. Yogita Goyal analyzes the tensions between romance and realism in the literature of the African diaspora, examining a remarkably diverse group of twentieth-century authors, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Chinua Achebe, Richard Wright, Ama Ata Aidoo and Caryl Phillips. Shifting the center of black diaspora studies by considering Africa as constitutive of black modernity rather than its forgotten past, Goyal argues that it is through the figure of romance that the possibility of diaspora is imagined across time and space. Drawing on literature, political history and postcolonial theory, this significant addition to the cross-cultural study of literatures will be of interest to scholars of African American studies, African studies and American literary studies.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *The Cultural Memory of Africa in African American and Black British Fiction, 1970-2000* Leila Kamali, 2016-12-10 This book offers a new approach to reading the cultural memory of Africa in African American fiction from the post-Civil Rights era and in Black British fiction emerging in the wake of Thatcherism. The critical period between the decline of the Civil Rights Movement and the dawn of the twenty-first century saw a deep contrast in the distinctive narrative approaches displayed by diverse African diaspora literatures in negotiating the crisis of representing the past. Through a series of close readings of literary fiction, this work examines how the cultural memory of Africa is employed in diverse and specific negotiations of narrative time, in order to engage and shape contemporary identity and citizenship. By addressing the practice of "remembering" Africa, the book argues for the signal importance of the African diaspora's literary interventions, and locates new paradigms for cultural identity in contemporary times.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Memories of Diversity - Diversity of Memory Mémoires de la diversité - Diversité de la mémoire* Astrid M. Fellner, Laurence McFalls, 2023 How do diversity and memory mutually shape one another? This volume of the IRTG Diversity series shows that a focus on memory introduces an important and contested temporal dimension to the politics, practices, and narratives of diversity. Exploring the various entanglements of historical projections

and representations of and from the past with contemporary discourses on difference and inclusion, the articles in this collection problematize memory in relationship to three (often overlapping) modes of storytelling: literature, ethno-biography, and historiography. From the construction of diasporic identities to family migration histories to the conflicted politics of remembering, memories shape diversity, be they in the form of shared memories, divided memories, or conflicting memories.

crossing the river caryl phillips: The British Slave Trade and Public Memory Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, 2006-01-11 How does a contemporary society restore to its public memory a momentous event like its own participation in transatlantic slavery? What are the stakes of once more restoring the slave trade to public memory? What can be learned from this history? Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace explores these questions in her study of depictions and remembrances of British involvement in the slave trade. Skillfully incorporating a range of material, Wallace discusses and analyzes how museum exhibits, novels, television shows, movies, and a play created and produced in Britain from 1990 to 2000 grappled with the subject of slavery. Topics discussed include a walking tour in the former slave-trading port of Bristol; novels by Caryl Phillips and Barry Unsworth; a television adaptation of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*; and a revival of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. In each case, Wallace reveals how these works and performances illuminate and obscure the history of the slave trade and its legacy. While Wallace focuses on Britain, her work also speaks to questions of how the United States and other nations remember inglorious chapters from their past.

crossing the river caryl phillips: The Columbia Guide to Contemporary African American Fiction Darryl Dickson-Carr, 2005-10-14 From Ishmael Reed and Toni Morrison to Colson Whitehead and Terry McMillan, Darryl Dickson-Carr offers a definitive guide to contemporary African American literature. This volume-the only reference work devoted exclusively to African American fiction of the last thirty-five years-presents a wealth of factual and interpretive information about the major authors, texts, movements, and ideas that have shaped contemporary African American fiction. In more than 160 concise entries, arranged alphabetically, Dickson-Carr discusses the careers, works, and critical receptions of Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, Jamaica Kincaid, Charles Johnson, John Edgar Wideman, Leon Forrest, as well as other prominent and lesser-known authors. Each entry presents ways of reading the author's works, identifies key themes and influences, assesses the writer's overarching significance, and includes sources for further research. Dickson-Carr addresses the influence of a variety of literary movements, critical theories, and publishers of African American work. Topics discussed include the Black Arts Movement, African American postmodernism, feminism, and the influence of hip-hop, the blues, and jazz on African American novelists. In tracing these developments, Dickson-Carr examines the multitude of ways authors have portrayed the diverse experiences of African Americans. The *Columbia Guide to Contemporary African American Fiction* situates African American fiction in the social, political, and cultural contexts of post-Civil Rights era America: the drug epidemics of the 1980s and 1990s and the concomitant war on drugs, the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, the struggle for gay rights, feminism, the rise of HIV/AIDS, and racism's continuing effects on African American communities. Dickson-Carr also discusses the debates and controversies regarding the role of literature in African American life. The volume concludes with an extensive annotated bibliography of African American fiction and criticism.

crossing the river caryl phillips: Minor Genres in Postcolonial Literatures Delphine Munos, Bénédicte Ledent, 2020-06-05 Moving beyond the postcolonial literature field's traditional focus on the novel, this book shines a light on the minor genres in which postcolonial issues are also explored. The contributors examine the intersection of generic issues with postcolonial realities in regions such as South Africa, Nigeria, New Zealand, Indonesia, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean. These minor genres include crime fiction, letter writing, radio plays, poetry, the novel in verse and short stories, as well as blogs and essays. The volume closes with Robert Antoni's discussion of his use of the vernacular and digital resources in *As Flies to Whatless Boys* (2013), and suggests that major genres might yield new webs of meaning when digital media are mobilized with

a view to creating new forms of hybridity and multiplicity that push genre boundaries. In focusing on underrepresented and understudied genres, this book pays justice to the multiplicity of the field of postcolonial studies and gives voice to certain literary traditions within which the novel occupies a less central position. This book was originally published as a special issue of the Journal of Postcolonial Writing.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow* Daniel Y. Kim, 2005
This book is a comparative study of African American and Asian American representations of masculinity and race, focusing primarily on the major works of two influential figures, Ralph Ellison and Frank Chin.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Revisiting Slave Narratives I* Judith Misrahi-Barak, 2016-01-12
One cannot fail to be impressed by the number of works of fiction relating to slavery and the slave trade, writing back to the original slave narratives of the 18th and 19th centuries. If the African-American authors of the 1960s and 1970s are now well-known, they find an echo in works written more recently in the 1980s and 1990s by American, African, African-American and Caribbean writers. About twenty writers come under the scrutiny of renowned scholars, offering perspectives into what makes it so necessary today for writers, critics and readers alike to revisit, reassess and reappropriate the canonical texts of slavery and post-slavery literature. The specificity of this collection is to focus on neo-slave novels while bringing together African-American and Caribbean authors. On ne peut qu'être impressionné par le nombre d'œuvres littéraires de fiction qui se rapportent à l'esclavage et au commerce des esclaves, répondant ainsi aux premiers récits d'esclaves publiés aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles. Si les auteurs africains-américains des années soixante et soixante-dix sont maintenant bien connus, toute une nouvelle vague d'écrivains Américains, Africains, Africains-Américains et Caribbéens, poursuivent et renouvèlent, depuis les années quatre-vingt et quatre vingt-dix, cette tradition. Rassemblés autour de l'œuvre d'une vingtaine d'écrivains, des universitaires de renom ouvrent, dans ce recueil, des perspectives nouvelles pour comprendre la nécessité qui poussent écrivains, critiques et lecteurs à relire, réécrire et revisiter cette littérature de l'esclavage encore aujourd'hui.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *The Event of Postcolonial Shame* Timothy Bewes, 2010-11-22
In a postcolonial world, where structures of power, hierarchy, and domination operate on a global scale, writers face an ethical and aesthetic dilemma: How to write without contributing to the inscription of inequality? How to process the colonial past without reverting to a pathology of self-disgust? Can literature ever be free of the shame of the postcolonial epoch--ever be truly postcolonial? As disparities of power seem only to be increasing, such questions are more urgent than ever. In this book, Timothy Bewes argues that shame is a dominant temperament in twentieth-century literature, and the key to understanding the ethics and aesthetics of the contemporary world. Drawing on thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Theodor Adorno, and Gilles Deleuze, Bewes argues that in literature there is an event of shame that brings together these ethical and aesthetic tensions. Reading works by J. M. Coetzee, Joseph Conrad, Nadine Gordimer, V. S. Naipaul, Caryl Phillips, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Zoë Wicomb, Bewes presents a startling theory: the practices of postcolonial literature depend upon and repeat the same structures of thought and perception that made colonialism possible in the first place. As long as those structures remain in place, literature and critical thinking will remain steeped in shame. Offering a new mode of postcolonial reading, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame* demands a literature and a criticism that acknowledge their own ethical deficiency without seeking absolution from it.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Diaspora Literature: Identity Beyond Borders* Dr. Pradip Mondal, Dr. Reshmi S, Maitrayee Sarma, Swagatalakshmi Basu, Ayan Chakraborty, Ms. M.R. Pranitha, Bandana Baruah, Dr. Soma Kamal Tandon, Dr. Naveen Kumar Vishwakarma, Sarita Chanwaria, Ambika Gahlot, Rimzhim Kumari, Srija Chakraborty, Dr. Mamta Bisht, Dr. Priti Bala Sharma, Dr. Hemlatha Sharma, Dr. Brajesh Kumar Gupta 'Mewadev', Dr. Sonali Mahanta, Ms. Aarti Yadav, Suchetana Biswas, 2022-01-01
The book *Diaspora Literature: Identity Beyond Borders* is a compendium of erudite academic articles depicting the generations of diasporic contemplation and

consequences figured out in the literature of this specific theme and motif. The book is an enterprise to portray the displacement, alienation, clashes, assimilation, acculturation, rootlessness, torn identities, quest for identity, crisis of identity, and fusion and conflict between two cultures that have been strung out in three parts of diasporic concerns—Ecumenical Scenario, Acculturation and Question of Hyphenation in Indian Diaspora and Oscillating State of expatriates and immigrants.

crossing the river caryl phillips: Re-Membering the Black Atlantic Lars Eckstein, 2006-01-01 The Atlantic slave trade continues to haunt the cultural memories of Africa, Europe and the Americas. There is a prevailing desire to forget: While victims of the African diaspora tried to flee the sites of trauma, enlightened Westerners preferred to be oblivious to the discomfiting complicity between their enlightenment and chattel slavery. Recently, however, fiction writers have ventured to 're-member' the Black Atlantic. This book is concerned with how literature performs as memory. It sets out to chart systematically the ways in which literature and memory intersect, and offers readings of three seminal Black Atlantic novels. Each reading illustrates a particular poetic strategy of accessing the past and presents a distinct political outlook on memory. Novelists may choose to write back to texts, images or music: Caryl Phillips's Cambridge brings together numerous fragments of slave narratives, travelogues and histories to shape a brilliant montage of long-forgotten texts. David Dabydeen's *A Harlot's Progress* approaches slavery through the gateway of paintings by William Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds and J.M.W. Turner. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, finally, is steeped in black music, from spirituals and blues to the art of John Coltrane. Beyond differences in poetic strategy, moreover, the novels paradigmatically reveal distinct ideologies: their politics of memory variously promote an encompassing transcultural sense of responsibility, an aestheticist 'creative amnesia', and the need to preserve a collective 'black' identity.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Missions of Interdependence*, 2021-11-01 At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is necessary to combine into a productive programme the striving for individual emancipation and the social practice of humanism, in order to help the world survive both the ancient pitfalls of particularist terrorism and the levelling tendencies of cultural indifference engendered by the renewed imperialist arrogance of hegemonial global capital. In this book, thirty-five scholars address and negotiate, in a spirit of learning and understanding, an exemplary variety of intercultural splits and fissures that have opened up in the English-speaking world. Their methodology can be seen to constitute a seminal field of intellectual signposts. They point out ways and means of responsibly assessing colonial predicaments and postcolonial developments in six regions shaped in the past by the British Empire and still associated today through their allegiance to the idea of a Commonwealth of Nations. They show how a new ethic of literary self-assertion, interpretative mediation and critical responsiveness can remove the deeply ingrained prejudices, silences and taboos established by discrimination against race, class and gender.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *Transnational Jean Rhys* Juliana Lopoukhine, Frédéric Regard, Kerry-Jane Wallart, 2020-12-10 This volume investigates the frameworks that can be applied to reading Caribbean author Jean Rhys. While *Wide Sargasso Sea* famously displays overt forms of literary influences, Jean Rhys's entire oeuvre is so fraught with connections to other texts and textual practices across geographical boundaries that her classification as a cosmopolitan modernist writer is due for reassessment. *Transnational Jean Rhys* argues against the relative isolationism that is sometimes associated with Rhys's writing by demonstrating both how she was influenced by a wide range of foreign – especially French – authors and how her influence was in turn disseminated in myriad directions. Including an interview with Black Atlantic novelist Caryl Phillips, this collection charts new territories in the influences on/of an author known for her dislike of literary coteries, but whose literary communality has been underestimated.

crossing the river caryl phillips: *The Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture* Victoria Aarons, Phyllis Lassner, 2020-01-24 The *Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture* reflects current approaches to Holocaust literature that open up future thinking on Holocaust representation. The chapters consider diverse generational perspectives—survivor

writing, second and third generation—and genres—memoirs, poetry, novels, graphic narratives, films, video-testimonies, and other forms of literary and cultural expression. In turn, these perspectives create interactions among generations, genres, temporalities, and cultural contexts. The volume also participates in the ongoing project of responding to and talking through moments of rupture and incompleteness that represent an opportunity to contribute to the making of meaning through the continuation of narratives of the past. As such, the chapters in this volume pose options for reading Holocaust texts, offering openings for further discussion and exploration. The inquiring body of interpretive scholarship responding to the Shoah becomes itself a story, a narrative that materially extends our inquiry into that history.

crossing the river caryl phillips: Postmodern Literature and Race Len Platt, Sara Upstone, 2015-02-19 *Postmodernism and Race* explores the question of how dramatic shifts in conceptions of race in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been addressed by writers at the cutting edge of equally dramatic transformations of literary form. An opening section engages with the broad question of how the geographical and political positioning of experimental writing informs its contribution to racial discourses, while later segments focus on central critical domains within this field: race and performativity, race and the contemporary nation, and postracial futures. With essays on a wide range of contemporary writers, including Bernadine Evaristo, Alasdair Gray, Jhumpa Lahiri, Andrea Levy, and Don DeLillo, this volume makes an important contribution to our understanding of the politics and aesthetics of contemporary writing.

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