
Self-Inscription as Negotiation and Transcendence of Boundaries in Asian American Writing

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Abstract

My presentation aims at sketching an Asian American tradition of writing where both the examination and the representation of the self and of the personal emerge as necessarily involving negotiating, crossing and transcending boundaries. By juxtaposing and putting into perspective some of Maxine Hong Kingston's seminal ways of "being" with Ruth Ozeki's tellings "for the time being", I will discuss conceptualizations, enactments and configurations that thrive on movement and interactions as well as on relation and engagement. I will thus endeavor to highlight landmarks in a tradition of inscribing the self from a prism of lives intersecting and connecting by scrutinizing ways in which existence acquires meaning, is illuminated and is elucidated while cutting across mental cartographies and textual boundaries. My analyses will also consider the deliberate and innovative formal and aesthetic choices that sustain these practices and acts in order to understand how they also gesture to established cultural forms and perform connections between and across various narratives, tropes and sites.

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