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# Transformation, transgression and translation in contemporary American Women's Writing

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## Abstract

The article focuses on the works of multicultural American women writers who use the metaphors of translation and transgression to underscore fluidity of the categories of gender, ethnicity and class. In order to show how the transfer of codes and identities is achieved across cultures, I will explore the works of Sandra Cisneros, Isabel Allende, Gloria Anzaldúa, Louise Erdrich, Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston. The analysis of the metaphor of translation in their fiction reveals that, although they come from different ethnic communities, they use similar narrative strategies such as code-mixing, covert translation, irony and parody which simultaneously disrupt the dominance of one language and culture over the other and allow for the existence of different modes of expression and hybrid identities. As such, transformation and transgression constitute political acts on the part of the writers in the subversion of the dominant discourse and criticism of the dominant community's treatment of minorities. They can also serve as a resistance to the erasure of the Other and its retrieval from the margins of society. Particularly important are the writers' revisions and replacement of the dominant Christian and American master narratives with the substitutes from their native cultures. They similarly use performative gender in their fiction to renegotiate both social categories and the notions of history. Through the characters of homosexuals, transsexuals and transvestites, who question boundaries between the dominant social categories, primarily race/ethnicity and gender, multicultural American women writers examine the ways in which translation of codes can become a way of transcending social borders and moving from a periphery to the center.

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