



Negotiating Identities in Women's Lives

Christine W. Sizemore, Christine Wick Sizemore

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Women face different psychological issues at different ages. But these issues and the experience of confronting them depend on cultural contexts. Literary works represent these psychological and social conflicts, but the manner of representation varies according to the culture of the author. This book brings together feminism, postcolonial theory, and developmental psychology to analyze how traditional literary forms are transformed by women writing in different cultures. The volume discusses works by such well known authors as Margaret Atwood, Nadine Gordimer, Keri Hulme, and Doris Lessing, along with fiction by less studied writers such as Barbara Burford, Joan Riley, and Jessica Anderson.

By juxtaposing novels from different cultures, the volume highlights the new ways in which women renegotiate their identities at different ages and writers reconfigure novelistic forms. The first chapter looks at the search for adulthood in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, set in Zimbabwe, and in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*, set in Canada. The second, on the search for intimacy, analyzes how Barbara Burford's lesbian novella *The Threshing Floor* and Keri Hulme's evocation of Maori commensalism in *The Bone People* undo the traditional romance plot. Later chapters offer similar examinations of how various life stages, such as the searches for place, space, and integrity, are treated in other works.

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