



# **Class Definitions: On the Lives and Writings of Maxine Hong Kingston, Sandra Cisneros, and Dorothy Allison**

*Michelle M. Tokarczyk*

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This book begins with two questions. First, how does working-class status intersect with gender, race, sexual orientation, and religion? Second, how do working-class status and other identities play out in the lives and work of individual writers? The text answers these questions by closely examining the lives and writings of the three authors named. It argues that despite the differences in the authors' ethnic backgrounds, their work is characterized by traits widely recognized as markers of working-class writing: a desire to provide a voice for the voiceless, an emphasis on solidarity, and a focus on representing the lived experience of working-class people. A chapter, written in highly accessible and lucid prose, is devoted to each author. Unpublished interviews with Kingston, Cisneros, and Allison are included. The book concludes by reiterating the vitality and importance of working-class women's literature. Michelle M. Tokarczyk is a Professor of English at Goucher College.

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