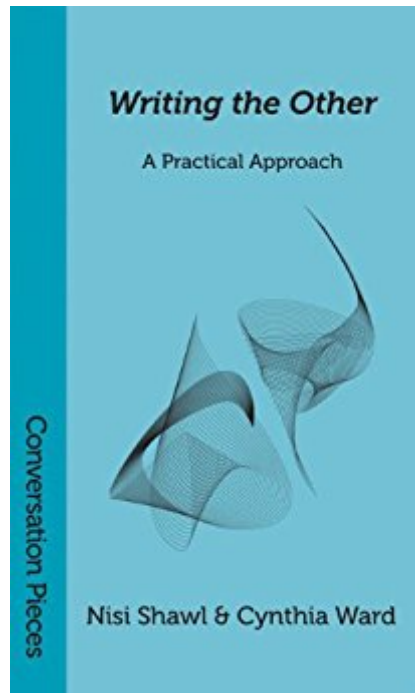




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Writing The Other (Conversation Pieces Book 8)



Synopsis

During the 1992 Clarion West Writers Workshop attended by Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward, one of the students expressed the opinion that it is a mistake to write about people of ethnic backgrounds different from your own because you might get it wrong "horribly, offensively wrong" and so it is better not even to try. This opinion, commonplace among published as well as aspiring writers, struck Nisi as taking the easy way out and spurred her to write an essay addressing the problem of how to write about characters marked by racial and ethnic differences. In the course of writing the essay, however, she realized that similar problems arise when writers try to create characters whose gender, sexual preference, and age differ significantly from their own. Nisi and Cynthia collaborated to develop a workshop that addresses these problems with the aim of both increasing writers' skill and sensitivity in portraying difference in their fiction as well as allaying their anxieties about "getting it wrong." *Writing the Other: A Practical Approach* is the manual that grew out of their workshop. It discusses basic aspects of characterization and offers elementary techniques, practical exercises, and examples for helping writers create richer and more accurate characters with "differences."

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Customer Reviews

I'm a Filipino, and a geek, but I'm not used to feeling like an Other, like I'm not a part of the mainstream. I live in the Philippines, so I am, in fact, part of the majority. And my geekish pursuits tend toward reading books, watching anime, and playing video games, all of which are activities I can indulge in by myself. But in the world of mass media, particularly genre media, my race ensures that I'm not part of the majority. I know what it feels like to read a story where my country is never mentioned, or watch a movie where the only character that is Filipino is a maid. While I'd wish it were otherwise, I don't generally view stories created outside of my country to be the venue where I'm going to find plentiful and authentic representations of Filipinos and Philippine culture. As a Filipino writer, I think that's one of my responsibilities. But as I mentioned, in the Philippines, I am part of the dominant paradigm, the person of Unmarked State (we'll get to that later). The Philippines is home to many indigenous communities that have often been marginalized by both our local media and popular culture. As a contrast, I live in Metro Manila, "Imperial Manila" as some of our southern brethren call it, and grew up pretending to be part of G.I. Joe or one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, instead of being a Tikbalang or the hero Lam-Ang. And yet, as often as I can, I try to tap into the rich intangible heritage of our indigenous mythologies when I write...and, while I do it out of love and in order to promote those myths, it often scares me out of my mind.

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