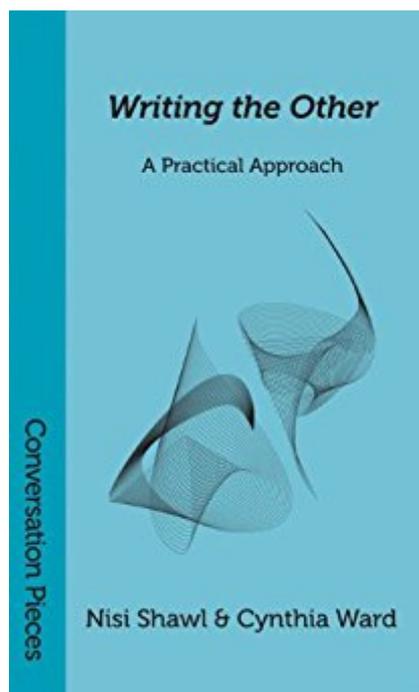


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# Writing The Other (Conversation Pieces Book 8)



## 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."

## Book Information

File Size: 285 KB

Print Length: 122 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: November 1, 2011

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0065MZ26O

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #50,972 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #42

in Kindle Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Literature #54 in Kindle Books >

Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Reference #102 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

## Customer Reviews

I have two books that I always fall back on for advice. One is Mark Teppo's *Jumpstart Your Novel*. This is the other. I took the class, I've read the book, and still look to Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward for wisdom and advice. The real meat of the book is the exercises. The theory is great, but working through their guided writing practice really drives home the experience.

This is a great, quick read loaded with advice for writing about any kind of "other." While it's intended for science fiction and fantasy authors, it's good for writers of any genre - fiction or nonfiction. The focus is on the differences most relevant in North American mainstream culture: race, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, and gender. The book offers a crash course in not just writing about the "other" but helping us to see the ways in which we are all "others" to someone. Great advice and writing exercises. I recommend this to all writers who care about populating their writing with characters different from themselves. It would also be great for use in any creative writing classroom above an introductory level.

A great read for any student of writing - offers valuable viewpoints and terminology for writing characters different than yourself. An important reminder that writing doesn't exist in a political or social vacuum. Offers some helpful examples, but I would have appreciated more attention to - or even explicit demonstrations of - revision using the authors' principles.

Well-written and insightful, this book has much to offer. I found it somewhat difficult to connect with many of the examples provided because the chosen genres of the authors are so different from what I customarily read. The message, however, puts this book on the "recommended for aspiring writers" list. I suspect it would be very helpful to those whose occupations put them in group speaking situations, also.

I think this is a good starting point for thinking about issues of intersectionality and writing characters that are different from your personal perspective. But if you're the kind of person who's already thinking about these things and trying to write sensitively (as I was), then there wasn't a lot of new information.

This book is a must for anyone seeking to enrich their writing with diverse characters and wants to tell convincing stories without appropriation.

A must read for every writer. All writers need to think outside the box when developing character and plot, and not fall back on expected stereotypes. Here's how you can write fully-realized, truly rounded characters who are not of your own background, from two experts in the field.

Well written, concise, and insightful. I definitely recommend any writer pick up a copy. The exercises will keep me busy for awhile!

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