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The Controversy of Writing in the Voices of Others

Abstract:

There has been increasing criticism of mainstream writers who create characters from marginalised cultural backgrounds different to their own, especially when those characters are written from the first-person perspective. This can be seen as a kind of ventriloquism (Couser 1998), stereotypical and racist characterisation (Leane 2016), and lead to further oppression since the privileged person is the one who speaks rather than the group represented (Alcoff 1991). At the same time, writing that explores the migration story of people from refugee backgrounds, written by writers from those backgrounds as well as writers who have not had those experiences, has become increasingly more common (see Menchu 1984; Nazer & Lewis 2003; Eggers 2006; Cleave 2008; de Kretser 2012; Al Muderis & Weaver 2014). But there is little work on the difference between stories that have been constructed with consultation of the people represented and those that have not. A look into how novels of this kind are written can contribute to the debate of writing the other. In order to explore this concept, I wrote a novel manuscript about the everyday lives of four characters from refugee backgrounds in three drafts. The first was produced through fieldwork and observation, the second after interviews and the third through feedback. This paper compares the first two drafts of the manuscript. It suggests that prior to interviews and self-reflection, the writing followed the dominant narrative told about refugees, referred to here as 'the national story' (Birch 2013), which played up victimhood and played down racism. Interviews and reflection on instances of cultural misappropriation produced a story that began to counter to this narrative. This suggests that when the people represented are not involved in the writing process, the national story dramatically influences the ways in which the characters are written.

Biographical note

Tresa LeClerc recently completed her PhD in Media and Communication at RMIT University in Australia. Her creative writing research project was a novel manuscript entitled *All The Time Lost.* She also holds a MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the University of Melbourne. Her short story 'American Riviera', was published as part of the book *9 Slices* and her academic writing has appeared in *Writing in Practice*: *Journal of Creative Writing Research*. She is a member of RMIT's non/fictionLab and the Digital Ethnography Research Centre. She is a recipient of the Research Training Program Scholarship.

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Introduction

In the opening address of the 2016 Brisbane Writers Festival, writer Lionel Shriver caused a literary controversy by unleashing a tirade against identity politics in fiction writing. She argued that criticism against writing 'the other', specifically characters of marginalised backgrounds, was akin to literary censorship. According to a transcript of the speech, Shriver claimed, 'the kind of fiction we are "allowed" to write is in danger of becoming so hedged, so circumscribed, so tippy-toe, that we'd indeed be better off not writing the anodyne drivel to begin with' (2016). Subsequent articles and public commentary by writers on the topic opened up a debate centring on writing the other in fiction (see Beneba Clarke 2016; Abdel-Magied 2016; Convery 2016; Araluen 2017; Tolentino 2016).

In the field of literary studies there has been substantial scholarship on the representation of the other in fiction (see Hall 1997; Said 2003; Bhabha 2012; Achebe 2016; Spivak 1988). While the term 'the other' can be used to describe any characters who are different in background to 'the self' or author, it is usually in reference to mainstream writers writing about characters from more marginalised groups. Derrida saw Western metaphysics as binary oppositions in which 'the self' was the point of reference and 'the other' constituted the exclusion of this self (Kapila 1996: 421). Therefore, in writing, the other is constructed in relation to the self. However, when the other is the marginalised subject, it also represents a history steeped in unequal power relations in which the other is constructed as lacking compared to the self. In effect, these representations of self and other cannot be separated from the author's representation and must be deeply considered in any attempt to write characters of marginalised cultural backgrounds. There have been important insights into the challenges of writing the other from the perspective of fiction writers (see Rose 2011; McDonald & Pryor 1999/2000; Savage 2016; Padmore 2006). However, it has not been established if there are particular strategies writers can adopt, such as consulting with the relevant communities, that make a difference to the kind of novel that is produced.

In order to examine how the other may be represented, I looked at refugee narratives. Refugee narratives (see Menchu 1984; Nazer & Lewis 2003; Eggers 2006; Cleave 2008; de Kretser 2012; Al Muderis & Weaver 2014) often involve collaboration between a non-refugee writer and a person from a refugee background and are written as a form of advocacy. Yet there is relatively little explanation of how these narratives are constructed, aside from brief descriptions in the prologues and epilogues. By examining how refugee narratives may be constructed and the process of writing my creative dissertation manuscript entitled *All the Time Lost*, I aimed to interrogate the difference between a text that involved formal consultation with those represented and one that did not.

All the Time Lost followed the lives of four characters from refugee backgrounds across a day in Melbourne. The main characters were from Chile, Iran, Somalia and Sudan. The manuscript was the culmination of three drafts, each using a different method inspired by ethnographic research, but with an understanding of the problems associated with representing otherness as discussed by postcolonial theorists including Homi Bhabha (2012), Stuart Hall (1996; 1997), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) and Edward Said (2003). The first draft was constructed during fieldwork within the refugee community, which is meant to mirror the process of writing a novel through observation and empathy. The second draft was created using interviews conducted

with 15 people in Melbourne's refugee community, and out of these interviewees, three participated in the feedback sessions that characterised the third draft. This paper is a reflection on the first two drafts of the novel.

In this process, my own position of self was important, both as a non-refugee and as a writer of Chilean and white American background. I used my proximity to the Chilean character to establish a character that most represents a 'self'. But my cultural background also raised another important aspect to consider - that of terminology. The 'write what you know' debate is often discussed in relation to People of Colour (POCs) and white writers. As such, I needed to explore whether I identified as a Person of Colour.

The term POC encompasses a broad range of cultural backgrounds, each with its own unique issues and levels of discrimination. This is also problematic when it is used to describe First Nations writers. As author Claire G. Coleman tweeted, 'The struggles of other POC are not the same as the struggles of Indigenous peoples. In Australia most POC (those who are not Indigenous) have settler privilege. There are struggles in common but not all our struggles are shared' (Coleman cited in Pearson 2017). To draw on Coleman's point, the issues with writing Indigenous characters at times overlap with those of POC characters, but not always. Issues also include a history of colonisation, extremely racist representation and a consistent failure to understand the culture that goes largely unchecked (see Heiss 2002; Phillips & Lucas-Pennington 2017; Langton 2003; Leane 2016). As a result, I use the term POC to refer to characters of colour from non-Indigenous backgrounds. The term white can also be contentious. Academics such as Eileen Moreton-Robinson (2004) and Ghassan Hage (2014) define and analyse whiteness in terms of the position of privilege that it provides. This is significant because of the relationship between whiteness and the maintenance of racial hierarchies, which positions whiteness as the norm against which other races are judged (Moreton-Robinson 2004: vii). When I discuss whiteness, I refer specifically to cultural privilege and as well as its potential to support oppressive racial structures. As a result, I define myself as POC, but acknowledge that I also receive many of the privileges of whiteness.

While these aspects have a significant bearing on the debate of writing otherness, in this paper I frame the conversation around key positions within the argument: artistic freedom, sensitivity and cultural appropriation. I see artistic freedom and sensitivity existing on a continuum; artistic freedom advocates the use of empathy and imagination, while sensitivity encourages as much engagement with the people represented as possible. Artistic freedom, the position that Shriver advocates, sees characters of marginalised backgrounds as adequately represented by more privileged writers through their use of empathy, and criticism against how characters are represented as censorship (see Shriver 2016; Convery 2016).

The position of sensitivity suggests that the people written about should be consulted in some capacity (see Rose 2011; Savage 2016; McDonald & Pryor 1999/2000), and given the opportunity to review the work when possible. In her paper, 'Theft is theft: the ethics of telling other people's stories', Jessica Rose (2011) interrogates her right as a white writer to tell the story of a Sri Lankan family in fiction, even though the story is based on her close friend's family. Rose observes that being ethical means to be 'in a constant state of worry', (Rose 2011: 5) and seems to agree (at least somewhat) with the position that political correctness may lead to silencing of writers (Rose 2011: 5). Here I take 'political correctness' to mean avoiding terminology that

may cause offense. Her conclusion is that 'we should always be aware of our responsibilities to the voices we represent in our fiction: to question the impact of our decisions and actions' (Rose 2011: 7). Like Rose, Angela Savage (2016) describes her practice of writing the other as a dialogue between herself and the text. She takes the position that it is up to writers to set their own ethical standards, but argues that conversations between the writer and community represented are essential ethical practice (Savage 2016). While Savage seeks to converse, Meme McDonald sees her role as a collaborator (McDonald & Pryor 1999/2000: 2) reinforcing the importance of working with subjects and gaining approval when telling the stories of others.

A third position sees writing the other as cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation can be defined as 'the taking over of creative or artistic forms, themes, or practices by one cultural group from another' which carry 'connotations of exploitation and dominance' (Drabble et al 2007). Arguments against cultural appropriation problematise writers of privileged backgrounds writing marginalised characters as this can lead to misrepresentation, and in turn impact the way a cultural group is viewed. This is seen as a form of voice appropriation, as it does not allow the people represented to explore their own identity (see Alcoff 1991). It has been argued that as white writers are more likely to be published than writers of colour and Indigenous writers (Childress 2017), this is seen as a further expression of western dominance and suppression because it reinforces racial hierarchies. The theory is that in abstaining from writing the other, writers are making space for those underrepresented groups to represent themselves.

It must be noted that not all cultural appropriation is ethically questionable. Some items may be freely transferred from one culture to another without causing offense, such as the souvenirs we collect from our travels (Young & Brunk 2009: 4). However, what we may refer to more specifically as 'cultural misappropriation' is an attack on the identity of a culture, and has the potential to cause harm in that it may result in discrimination, poverty and lack of opportunity (Young & Brunk 2009: 4).

Writing Otherness

My research into writing the other began by looking at refugee narratives. The most common form of refugee narrative is the testimonial. Brian Yost uses the term 'testimony narratives' derived from the Latin American 'testimonio', to describe 'collaborative acts involving a speaker who has witnessed injustice and violence and an academic or other professional writer in order to raise awareness in US or European readers' (2011: 149). A testimonial is assumed to be a written account of a refugee's experience. Testimonial forms, such as advocacy Facebook pages that display a picture of a person from a refugee background and their life story are a way for the writers to increase awareness about human rights abuses witnessed by refugees. Narrative-based testimonials as advocacy are increasingly gaining value in the fields of human rights and advocacy research (Patel 2012: 235). Stories about the refugee experience often use narratives of helplessness and suffering. These draw on the sympathy and empathy of target audiences in order to appeal to them to enact change, or offer financial support (Kisiara 2015).

Although not explicitly listed as advocacy site, Facebook sites, such as Nicola Gray's *New Humans of Australia* (NHOA 2015), inspired by American Brandon Stanton's popular site *Humans of New York* (HONY 2015), reposition these testimonial forms into the popular culture mainstream. NHOA displays a picture of a person from a refugee background and their life story. However, the stories on Gray's site employ a

similar narrative structure: the subject usually came from a country in which it was difficult to live, either worked hard in Australia or is working hard in Australia, and either now has a good life or believes that he or she will have a happy, fulfilling future. Arnold Zable (Zable et al 2016), in a talk at the Melbourne Writer's Festival called this the 'three act structure': before, during and after migration. Further, the use of the first person narrator and photograph, followed by the name and country gives the impression this information was either said or written directly by the subject. However, in a radio interview Gray explains that she writes the posts after interviewing people, and then picks out the parts she feels 'make a good story' (Gray et al 2015). The interview process Gray follows implies framing—specific questions are asked and this frames the content. The use of interviews also suggests there is some omission, selection, and perhaps even clarification of the English used. Regarding life stories, Paul Lauritzen (2004: 34-35) writes that when the writing is attributed to the subject, the reader is likely to feel manipulated or betrayed if they are led to believe the subject has not had direct experience with events. However, like fiction, short testimonials are not expected to provide explanations of how the writing is produced, even if information is changed or omitted to protect the subject. The authenticity of the text is assumed.

When it comes to writing novels, collaborative works can offer more transparency. Books are often accompanied by a prologue or epilogue in which the subject of the story briefly explains their collaboration with the writer. For example, Dave Egger's *What is the What* (2006) is a novel about the life of Sudanese 'lost boy' Valentino Achek Deng as he escapes peril in Sudan before coming to the USA. In providing the before, during and after migration story, the narrative employs the familiar three-act structure. As I have discussed in a previous article (see LeClerc 2016), the preface written by Deng (2006) states that the novel was written over three years of interviews between Eggers and Deng, and declares that Deng approves of the finished work. Yost points out that in the preface, 'Eggers actively forces the recognition that he and Deng worked together collaboratively' (2011: 150). The collaboration itself lends more authenticity to the story, though it is stressed that the story is fictional: the text is described as the 'autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng', giving the reader the impression that it is based in reality, and Deng concedes that while Eggers fictionalised his story, he maintained 'the essential truthfulness of the storytelling' (Deng 2006).

It is obvious that including the subject in the process of writing lends more authenticity to the story in the eyes of the audience (LeClerc, 2016). Though we have some idea of how the stories produced by NHOA and *What is the What* are written, there is still a question of what role the interviews played in the construction of the story, and how the narrative changed through the writer's restructuring. For example, was the three-act structure the way the stories were told by the interviewees, or were those stories moulded by the writer into this form to fit a dominant narrative?

For my own writing, I applied for ethics approval to conduct ethnographic research. My ethnographic fieldwork was performed in a volunteer organisation that provided university-style classes for asylum seekers and refugees in Melbourne. My focus was on life in Australia post-migration. During this time, I kept a field journal, which consisted of reflections written as stories about my experiences with people from refugee backgrounds. The information from the journals would become the basis for *All the Time Lost*, which I proposed would follow four characters across a day in Melbourne as they moved from the suburbs to the centre of the city, at various points

on public transport. I explained my project to the organisation and those who attended. I also obtained informed consent from interviewees, who would be able to review a draft of the manuscript and provide feedback prior to the completion of the project.

The journal entries were descriptive, told from my perspective. I wrote much of the first draft of the novel in the first person, from the perspectives of the characters. As I wrote the first draft, I found myself empathising with the characters. Writers have discussed empathy as central to writing characters of other backgrounds (see Kennedy, 2016; Mintcheva 2016; Kent 2014; Bunch 2016), often ignoring the potential limitations of such a writing method. However, the memory of one of my journal entries troubled me. It described a young girl who had brought an origami boat to the group. I remembered it causing some members of the group much distress. As I wrote the first draft, I returned to my field journal, to see if my memory of the event was accurate:

> **[*Reflective journal excerpt*, 11.02.15]**
>
> The volunteers paired off with a student, and the student chose an article that we would read together. I was partnered with a man from Iran. ...
>
> At the end of the session an Asian woman came over with an origami boat that her young daughter had made. She didn't speak much English, but she said, 'for you', to a volunteer. Her daughter shyly hid behind the small children's table. It seemed, for some reason, her daughter wanted this volunteer to have it. He was a white-haired, kind looking white Australian man. He thanked the woman, and she and her daughter went out.
>
> 'It's beautiful', I said to the volunteer.
>
> 'You can have it', he told me and handed me the little boat made of brown scrap paper with crayon scribbles. It had three different sized cranes inside, lined up in order of height. I took it happily. Everyone approached me to get a closer look. Then, some people recoiled when they realised what it was.
>
> 'I hate boats,' the man I was working with said, with a half-smile.
>
> 'You hate boats?' I asked. The class was still standing around us and they agreed, 'Yes!'
>
> I smiled. 'I'll just put this away over here then', I said, moving it behind me. They began to laugh.
>
> 'Thank you, thank you', I heard many of them say.

Although I had worked with refugees for many years, instances where people became visibly agitated during my fieldwork left me feeling anxious. When I remembered the experience, I recalled that the subjects were as anxious as well. Rather than empathising, was I unconsciously transferring my emotions about the situation onto my memory of the interviewees? According to anthropologist Antonius C. G. M. Robben, the concept of transference is useful to consider when interviewing, which describes how feelings may arise when highly emotional issues are brought up, and thus influence our interpretation of the conversation (Robben 2007: 81). This becomes particularly difficult when the people researched are in a politically sensitive or vulnerable position. Teachers working in the refugee community are expected to undergo training before working with migrants, one section of which deals with issues of 'vicarious trauma', defined as 'a common phenomenon … that comes about because the empathy that workers need in order to engage effectively with their

clients leads them to internalise their clients' trauma and in so doing, become traumatised themselves' (Piper 2011: 113). They provide a diagram which shows that over-empathising runs the risk vicarious trauma. This speaks to the importance of self-reflection in the field. It also raises the question of whether a writer can over-empathise with a subject.

Reviewing my notebook, I noted that the distressing situation was not as intense as I recollected. In my notes, the group seemed quite happy and were laughing throughout the session, even after the paper boat emerged. This showed that both my notes and consciously reflecting upon my time in the field were integral to the avoidance of over-empathy, and provided me with some ability to recognise potential transference. However, this was a constant process of reflexivity; in danger of tilting toward over-empathy at any moment.

This experience indicates that empathy as a method of writing has its limitations. There is a danger that writers may be over-empathising or transferring their feeling onto the subject. A key criticism of collaborative refugee writing is that writers tend toward a focus on victimhood (Helff 2009: 333-334). Were I to write based on this experience before my reflection, I would have portrayed a character that was anxious and distressed. However this would have been a dramatised and inaccurate representation of my experience.

While some scenes in my manuscript were in danger of playing up victimhood, situations depicting violence against refugees perpetrated by white Australian characters were played down. Two scenes in the first draft of *All the Time Lost* featured verbal assault on public transport. These were inspired by media coverage of videoed instances of racism on public transportation. In their report, Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC 2013) distinguishes between racism and racial discrimination. Racism is:

> a belief that a particular race or ethnicity is inferior or superior to others. Racial discrimination involves any act where a person is treated unfavourably because of their race, nationality, colour, descent or ethnic origin. (VEOHRC 2013: 10)

Hage (2014) describes several forms of Australian racism. Of them, 'Hansonite racism' and 'condescending racism' are most relevant for the purposes of this paper. To Hage (2014: 233-234), Hansonite racism has its basis in a kind of 'egalitarian' ethos, the idea that certain immigrant groups are taking places that belong to Australians, a 'them' or 'us' mentality. Meanwhile, condescending racism takes the form of a casual acceptance of racism and disavowal of the person calling out the racist act, with such dismissals as 'oversensitive' or 'too serious'. In this relaxation of racialised forms of interaction can become routinised or normalised (Hage 2014: 234).

Despite the evidence of racism in our culture, I was hesitant to write these scenes. As a result, the first draft presented an overly positive image of the migration experience, not unlike those depicted in NHOA. Though present, the racial discrimination on public transport replaced the dangerous journey to Australia, and the characters eventually overcame these obstacles. Furthermore, there was no physical violence, the racial discrimination was verbal, and my refugee characters Azra and Nina were not afraid. But including verbal racism made me anxious; I wanted portray all the characters in a positive light. I didn't want white Australian society to be reflected badly. After interviews, though, that did change. The stories told to me seemed shocking in their violence. I discovered of the five female participants who wore the hijab three experienced racism and one feared it would happen to her because it

happened to someone she knew. Only one had never experienced any form of racism on public transport. The number of stories of racial discrimination on transport toward Islamic women caused me to rethink the softer storyline. If I was to remain true to the information I heard, I would need to convey even the violent stories – to not would be changing the story; it would be unethical.

An example of a story of racism on public transport came through an interview with a woman of Sudanese background. She pointed out that when Senator George Brandis (2014a) wanted to change the 18C Racial Discrimination Act, which would make it 'illegal to publicly 'offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate' a person or a group of people,' (Griffiths 2014) it had impacted her experience on public transport:

> **[*Interview with Z*, 25 March 2016]**
>
> *…that week he said that when I was on the tram coming from work and the tram was so full of people was like five o'clock and there was a guy came, very drunk guy, and he walk straight to me, I was the only black person there on the tram…and he say, 'I don't like that black people here. You should go back to where you come from…I am allowed to say my feeling. I am allowed to say what I feel'…And you know, as a black person, if you talk, if I talk and raise my voice, I would be the problem.*

The interviewee describes being followed and yelled at because she was of African background, and later describes an incident where a man stomps on her foot. While I had an incident of verbal assault in the first draft of *All of the Time Lost*, my sense was that this act is not representative of the 'average' Australian. I was conscious that I wanted to show that the few did not represent the many. In the incident above the interviewee feels she cannot speak out against racist comments because she will be the one to be labelled as the 'troublemaker'. The onlookers in their casual acceptance of the situation, enact what Hage referred to as 'condescending racism'. The ideology behind changing the act, as Brandis put it, was to prevent Australians from being taken to court for expressing a political opinion (2014b). To, in effect, say how they feel, which the man on the train certainly felt emboldened to do.

While the interviewees didn't think that all Australians were racist (quite often interviewees referred to Australia as tolerant, friendly and welcoming) racist instances were prevalent. It was therefore important to incorporate the racist incidents described by interviewees. I decided to translate the descriptions of the attacks present in the interviews into the second draft resulting in much more pronounced and violent racist incidents.

The national story versus the post-national story

I wondered why I was afraid to write a story that depicted white Australian society badly. Novelist and academic Tony Birch (2013) discusses the power of Indigenous writing to shift the national story, in what he calls 'post-national fiction'. Birch says as opposed to Non-Aboriginal writers, Aboriginal fiction refers not to Indigenous issues, but human issues, and thus 'speaks to the world' (2013). He mentions other writings that expose 'the prejudices and violence of society', such as Ali Alizadeh's *Transactions* (2013). Birch also notes the 'disloyalty effect', which occurs when critics, commentators and readers see a negative critique of the national story and view it as an act of ingratitude. Although fears over the way a writer may be perceived when writing the other in fiction may impact the work, fear of representing white Australia negatively may also impact writing. The evolution of the first and second drafts show that, unconsciously, I was trying to avoid the disloyalty effect

from critics by writing a nationalist story. Interviews alone were not enough to escape the national story – reflection on how characters were represented through empathy was also essential to understanding how I had unconsciously projected my own feelings onto the characters. Central to this were concepts brought up in arguments against cultural appropriation – I had to consider whether what I was producing was a misappropriation, casting interviewees into the role of the victimised refugee. I started in the first draft with the story of the 'good immigrant', and moved to one which showed the human issues behind instances of racism. In other words, from the first to the second draft, I began moving more toward the 'post-nationalist story'. It is important to note that while the story became less nationalist, I cannot be confident it achieved post-nationalism. As a result, I was left wondering whether the author's beliefs can ever be fully removed from the characters she/he writes.

Conclusion

The identity of the writer is important in understanding one's own position to characters of marginalised backgrounds, but this framing often ignores key positions within the argument: artistic freedom, sensitivity and cultural appropriation. While artistic freedom would advocate the use of empathy rather than speaking to the people represented, empathy without discussion with people represented as a method for writing and understanding others is problematic. Though empathy was effective in helping me write the first draft, reflecting upon my experiences in my journal revealed that my empathetic response to the characters was overly empathetic, resulting in characters that were markedly more victimised and even stereotypical. Furthermore, interviews provided insight into how the writer may impose a narrative structure over the story that is told to them. Sensitivity was important, and even necessary in helping to understand the characters. It showed the significance of reflecting on one's writing and engaging with, listening to and acting on the advice of the group being represented. Before interviews and reflections, I tended to adhere to the 'national story', one which referenced existing stories told about otherness. Interviews and reflections led to a more 'post-national story', which challenged the national story. In this version, issues, such as racism, became more pronounced. Cultural appropriation and the debate around it allows for questioning of the national story. As writers, we need to ask ourselves whether we are contributing to the oppression of a group of people by speaking for them, and reinforcing racist stereotypes as we do so. Without this criticism, such discussions would not be brought to light. As such, ongoing debate on the topic is necessary as it allows for traditional notions of what is acceptable in writing to be questioned.

Shriver (2016) defended the right to write the other by attacking proponents as creating 'rules' for her, and argued that 'identity politics' prohibits her from writing characters of other backgrounds. Equating ethical practice with 'censorship' or 'rules' only serves to stop writers from interrogating their practice and reinforce dominant notions about writing. Rather, ethical practice should serve as a guide to how writing can be improved. While I am not suggesting any 'rules' for writing characters from refugee backgrounds, I can argue that my work before engaging with the people I sought to represent and reflecting upon how I represented them was inferior and potentially harmful to a group's sense of identity in that it was perpetuating a stereotype of victimisation. Furthermore, as can be seen from NHOA and *What is the What,* there is the expectation from readers that what we are writing is, to a certain extent, authentic. Nothing can replace the authenticity of the writer writing a character of the same background. As writers, we must also consider whether writers of others

are more likely to be published than writers of colour due to structural racial privilege. If that is the case, then it is no doubt more important to stand aside and help those who want to speak for themselves be heard rather than writing in the voices of others.

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