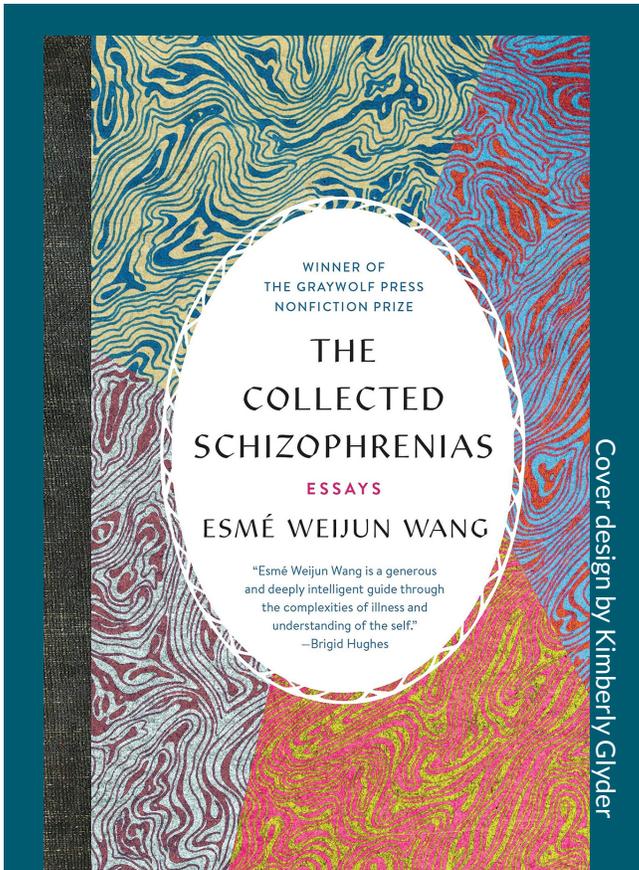


THE COLLECTED SCHIZOPHRENIAS

ESMÉ WEIJUN WANG, 2019



Cover design by Kimberly Glvder

MEET ESMÉ WEIJUN WANG

Esmé Weijun Wang is a Taiwanese-American author living with schizoaffective disorder. She is the winner of the 2018 Whiting Award for this essay collection and of the 2017 *Granta* Best Young Novelist award for her debut novel, *The Border of Paradise*.

SELECTED PRESS

Publisher's Weekly Starred Review

ABOUT THE BOOK

This essay collection describes the many facets of the author's life before and after her schizophrenia diagnosis, including the stigma she faced at college and in the medical community and her struggle to find self-worth.

Content warning: This book contains descriptions of sexual assault.

SUGGESTED COURSES

Counseling, English Composition, Nursing, Psychology, World Religions

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

- **Family** - Family systems, burden of care, choosing to have children, communication
- **Mental health** - Diagnosis, schizophrenia, stigma, involuntary treatment, high vs. low functioning, mental health in college, person-first language, reality vs. unreality, research, trauma, media representation
- **Identity** - Autonomy, choice, self-worth
- **Religion** - Spirituality and health, mysticism
- **Wellness** - Autoimmune disease, diagnosis, connection to mental health, disability

PAIRED TEXTS

- *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* by Kay Redfield James
- *A Beautiful Mind* by Sylvia Nasar
- "How Colleges Flunk Mental Health" by Katie J. M. Baker
- *Ten Days in a Mad-House* by Nellie Bly
- *Beware the Slenderman* (HBO)
- *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés

CLASS PROJECTS

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Schizophrenia is a disease that has been widely misrepresented in the media. Before they begin reading the book, ask students to write about their understanding of schizophrenia or mental health issues in general. Revisit this activity after they finish the book. Has their understanding or outlook changed? Why or why not?

THE REAL WORLD

Mental health policy and legislation affects us all. Ask students to research current mental health legislation. Have them write a position paper for or against the bills they find.

To bring the book even closer to home, help students investigate mental health policies and resources at the college. Are the resources adequate? What recommendations would they make to create a more equitable and accessible campus?

CONNECT TO CLASS CONTENT

Connect to class content by assigning a mini-research project about one of the book's relevant social issues. This book can be used to illustrate and humanize many different course topics. To reinforce the connections between the book and class content, you may want students to choose one or two individual essays as a starting place. Discuss the course-specific issues present in these essays before assigning the research project.

Some example research topics follow.

- **Nursing:** The author is hospitalized several times in the book. Research psychiatric nursing best practices for patients with schizoaffective disorders.
- **Psychology:** Wang critiques therapy groups that focus on the caregivers of family members living with a schizoaffective disorder; she argues that this type of therapy dehumanizes the diagnosed. Research--and critique--standard practice for family support groups.
- **Religion:** Wang opens up about her practice of witchcraft and mysticism to make sense of and cope with her illnesses, both mental and physical. Research modern witchcraft in America.



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