

HL 2020 Creative Writing Workshop

Owls and Nightingales

He was a daydreamer, withdrawn at times, and occasionally he sang shocking songs about the underworld.

(From Von Schoenworth's fairy tale collection *The Turnip Princess*, translated by Maria Tatar)

Division of English, Nanyang Technological University

Semester 2, AY 2017/2018

Day: Thursday, 2:30-5:30

Location: TBA

Seminar Leader: Helen Oyeyemi

The first nine weeks of this course will primarily be dedicated to creative reading. By the end of each three-hour class we'll have read and discussed a mix of writing from different stylistic, philosophical, historical and geographic locations that range from the solemn, eerie and momentous side of existence (owls) to the witty, jaunty, elegant side (nightingales). Most of what we'll read combines both characteristics and many more besides. Some of the writers we'll be reading include: Yoko Tawada, Denis Diderot, Teffi, Kuzhali Manickavel, Marina Endicott, Ali Smith, Heather O'Neill and Mariana Enriquez. You'll be able to access each week's readings a few days beforehand and at the beginning of each class I'll also ask each student to share a passage that you particularly enjoyed from any extracurricular reading you've done.

There is an additional requirement of a single written composition or portfolio of writing (max 6,000 words) that I'll be asking you to develop in response to our readings and discussions. The first nine weeks will have been all about reading, but at the end of week nine I'll be asking you to submit the work you've prepared, and for the remaining weeks of the course our three hour session will be divided into time slots you'll need to sign up for. During these time slots I'll be meeting with each of you individually to give feedback on submitted work and talk and think about the further development of your composition/portfolio. Overall we'll be looking at the ways in which writing can be like singing, addressing tonal and atmospheric techniques as well as the

production of echoes and that intriguing impulse that suddenly turns an observer into a participant. I'm hoping that our investigations in this field will be an owl-nightingale hybrid: serious fun.

SEMINAR NOTES:

- Please be present, please have your writing and reading done, and please be on time. If you are more than 20 minutes late to class it will count as an absence.
- Please no side conversations.
- Computers are fine but please no texting or other digital distractions.
- Let me know as soon as possible if you have any disability or other issue that requires special accommodation in class. (Examples: you need to sit in a special position so you can see or hear well; you need to leave your phone on in case of a family emergency; you need to leave class early to attend a medical appointment, etc.)
- Any writing that is not your own should be in quotation marks, unless everyone will recognize that it's by somebody else (even if they don't remember whom it's by), e.g. "The best laid plans of mice and men." Please make sure you are familiar with the NTU plagiarism guidelines.

ASSESSMENT:

Course grades will be determined by the following:

Class participation	15%
Composition/Portfolio	85%