



BODY AS A LOCUS OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Body, Health and Society



FINAL ESSAY

- deadline: topic and bibliography in moodle
- name
- questions?

OUTLINE

- Aihwa Ong
- reading reflections
- discussion



AIHWA ONG

[HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/AIHWA_ONG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aihwa_Ong)



* 1950

- Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Berkeley
- topic: entanglements of politics, technology, ethics and affects in rapidly changing situations on the Asia Pacific rim
- Work
 - *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, 2006.
 - *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, ed. with Stephen J. Collier, Blackwell Publishers, 2005.
 - *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, 2006.

ONG: THE PRODUCTION OF POSSESSION

- How was the texts for reading?

Situating the reading

- genre
- time
- space
- field
- methodology
- What is the text about? (where to search for it?)
 - Summary vs. Story (economic development and a medical...)
- What is the main argument? (where to search for it?)
- Questions (smth. not clear)/ Comments (smth. not agreed with?)
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 - +
 - -
 - ?



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT:

ONG, AIHWA (1988): THE PRODUCTION OF POSSESSION: SPIRITS AND THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION IN MALAYSIA. AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST 15/1: 28-42

- Define what is a spirit attack VS. hysteria?
- How is spirit possession **interpreted, managed** by and what is their **aim**:
 - psychologists
 - medical doctor
 - managers/policy makers
 - anthropologists
- Ong: spirit beliefs – the case?
 - *hantu, bomoh*, social order, culture and industrialization/urbanization and western medicine
- Mary Douglas and taboos?
- What is the main difference between Ong's and all the others' approach to it?
- Power relations (p 37): What is medicalization?
 - example
- How the nature-culture relation could be interpreted on the basis of this study?
- What is the relation between body, culture, and power in the example described?



<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/from-the-straits-times-archives-past-mass-hysteria-cases-in-singapore>

DISCUSSION

- Relate the paper to the Douglas' (social b.), Foucault's (self-regulation), Murphy's/ Merleu-Ponty's and Martin's (gender politics) approach to the body.
 - i.e. apply the theory of social body, docile bodies and embodiment on the example analyzed by Ong.

NEXT CLASS

- Topic

- Body – a central nod in a symbolic and social structure

- Reading

- Scheper-Hughes, N. ([1989] 2006): Mother's Love: Death without Weeping. In: Spradley, James P. & McCurdy, David W. (Eds.): Conformity & conflict: Readings in cultural anthropology. 14th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson, 156-162.

- Guiding questions

- What is an angel child?
- What factors are causing high child morbidity in the environment described?
- What is the relation between high child morbidity and mothers' love (kinship system) there?
- What meaning is ascribed to and social mechanisms relate to child's death in the study?
- In summary: what causes the phenomenon of common child's death and what this phenomenon further causes in the environment under study?

- Discussion questions

- Explain, how the power, social system, culture, and nature are entangled on the example of this case.
- Relate the paper to the Douglas', Bourdieu's and Csordas' approach to the body.
 - i.e. apply the theory of social body, habitus, and embodiment on the example analyzed by Scheper-Hughes